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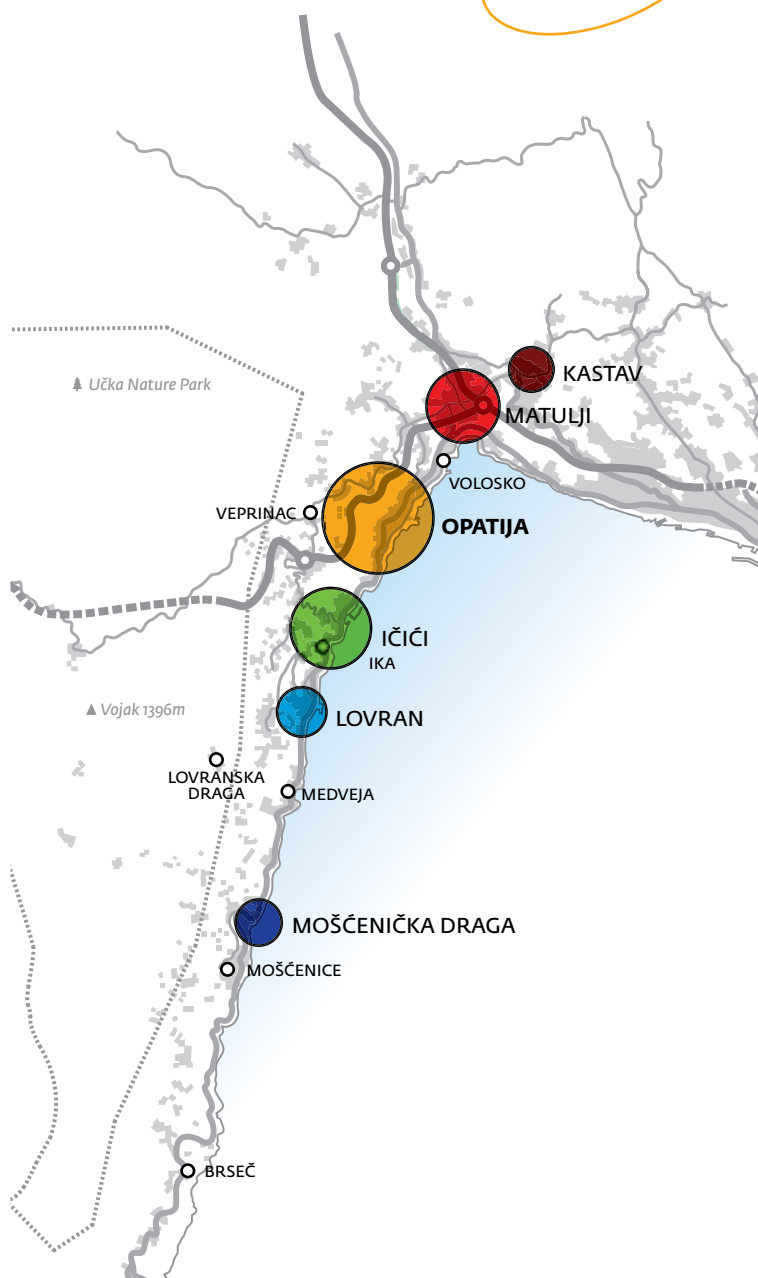


Distances

By road:
480 km - Munich, Vienna, Milan, Budapest

Railway stations:
Opatija-Matulji (5 km)
Rijeka (12 km)

Airports:
Krk (40 km)
Pula (83 km)
Trieste (105 km)
Ljubljana (135 km)
Zagreb (180 km)
Venice (215 km)



Europe
CROATIA

OPATIJA
RIVIERA





Welcome to the Opatija Riviera

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Towns on the Riviera

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Vila Angiolina / Park Angiolina

Tradition

My Travel Tip

The Lungomare seafront promenade

Between lush parks and magnificent villas on the one side, and foaming waves on the other, lies the Lungomare, one of the best-known attractions of the Opatija Riviera. This twelve-kilometre-long, hundred-year-old seafront promenade runs along the coast from Volosko past Opatija all the way to Lovran. Shaded by laurel and holm oak, the Lungomare offers the perfect opportunity to become acquainted with the local history or see first-hand some of the cultural monuments, such as the birthplace of the scientist Andrija Mohorovičić in Volosko or the Girl with the Seagull statue, a symbol of Opatija.



Lungomare



The Opatija Riviera is a place that according to Slavic mythology was chosen by the gods who inhabited the slopes of Mount Učka, and it was also a resort for kings and emperors in the late 19th century. Today, it still offers spectacular scenery and royal treatment to every visitor.

The Riviera is named after Opatija, a town that was the cradle of modern European tourism and which has for more than 170 years been considered one of the most elite Mediterranean destinations. Everything started with the Villa Angiolina in 1844, which was built by the Rijeka patrician Iginio Scarpa in honour of his wife. The villa soon became a favourite meeting place for the nobility, which at the time included the Empress Maria Anna and the Croatian governor, Ban Josip Jelačić. The villa is located at the heart of Opatija's most beautiful park and is today open to the public, as it is home to the Croatian Museum of Tourism and its exhibits that evoke memories of the early days of Croatian tourism. It is therefore the perfect place to learn more about the history of tourism on the Riviera. In addition to the Villa Angiolina, the Croatian Museum of Tourism occupies two more attractive venues: the Swiss House, located in the park amidst relaxing greenery a few steps from the Villa Angiolina, and the Juraj Šporer Arts Pavilion, which hosts exhibitions by renowned artists. However, it would be wrong to assume that the history of tourism on the Opatija Riviera can be found only in museums. It is within the reach of every visitor to the town, so why not take the opportunity to learn more about this tradition? We invite you to take a walk along the Lungomare coastal promenade just like the Emperor Franz Joseph did in the past. After all, this promenade today bears his name. You can also pay a visit to the local cafés to sample des-

serts that in the past were only served in Opatija and at the Viennese Court, or admire the sunrise while listening to the murmur of the sea and taking in the fragrant scent of laurel, just like so many couples in love before... Seventeen decades of tourism in this area are a guarantee of quality of service, as the local tourism professionals are particularly proud of their tradition and have carefully handed down knowledge from generation to generation. The hotel business on the Opatija Riviera, which started in 1884 with the construction of the Hotel Kvarner (the first hotel on the Croatian Adriatic), today still continues the "old school" tradition in which the guest always comes first. It is therefore no wonder that many visitors return again and again, and that some of them even find their home away from home here.



Hotel Kvarner



Juraj Šporer Arts Pavilion and Church of St. James



Girl with the Seagull

My Travel Tip

Camellias

Back in the 19th century, this gentle flower of exquisite beauty became the best-known decoration of Opatija's parks as a symbol of blooming tourism in a town designed for the elite. Camellias can today be seen in many parks and gardens along the Opatija Riviera, the most beautiful collection being the one in the Angiolina Park.





Mošćenice

Historic towns



Mošćenice town gate

"He who slaps somebody, pays 5 marks". This is written in the Veprinac Law, which is today regarded as one of the foundations of the Croatian legal system. It was written more than five hundred years ago on a stone tablet in front of the small Church of St. Anne, and its importance lies in the fact that it was extraordinarily humane for the time, as it stipulated financial penalties instead of corporal punishment. Veprinac is one of the three ancient hilltop towns on the

Opatija Riviera that every visitor interested in exploring the local historical heritage should not miss. Veprinac, Kastav and Mošćenice were once important fortifications on the Kastav manorial estate, which at that time stretched across the entire area of the present Opatija Riviera. Today, there are numerous sites of interest from different historical periods, from prehistory to the Middle Ages and modern times. Although this area has been continuously inhabit-



Veprinac



Kastav

ed, many parts have not been researched and conceal interesting surprises. For example, recent research in the small Church of St. Anne in Veprinac revealed valuable Glagolitic graffiti. It can be said that many visitors who come to these ancient towns to explore their historic monuments actually participate in a kind of "treasure hunt", in which the discovery of a new site of interest is always a wonderful reward.

These three historic towns provide a perfect insight into the former way of life of this area. If you want to learn how people used to live here in the past, we recommend visiting the local ethnographic and historical collections of everyday

items. You can even play an active part and experience first-hand the process of pressing olives and producing the finest olive oil in the ancient olive press (locally known as a toš) in Mošćenice, which is more than three hundred years old. You can also see what it felt like to be imprisoned in chains in the darkness of the dungeon in Veprinac, which was once reserved for serious offenders, or you can take a walk across Lokvina Square in Kastav, which is named after the Croatian word for the pond ("lokva") that in the past was used to collect water and where the local people in 1666 drowned Captain Morelli, who wanted to impose high taxes.

My Travel Tip

Lovran Old Town

In contrast to other fortified historic towns in the area, Lovran is located right on the coast. This was quite unusual in the past, when towns, as a rule, were built on hilltops for defensive purposes. The impressive tower that today still stands at the entrance to the old town of Lovran is a reminder of the times when only massive defensive walls could guarantee safety to its inhabitants

The most important part of the medieval fortification system is the well-preserved eastern town gate, known locally as Stubica. Its importance is indicated by the fact that it provided access to the economic centre of the town: the small harbour, known locally as mandrač. The famous 12th-century Arabian geographer El Idrissi described Lovran as the centre of shipbuilding in this part of Europe. This tradition is today reflected in the name of a wooden boat that is internationally known as Lovran Guc.



Lovran town gate



Lovran guc boat



Lovran old town



Fireworks Festival

Events

Every season of the year has something special to offer on the Opatija Riviera. The area's numerous festivals and events dedicated to music, film, theatre, food, culture or fireworks – to mention just a few – are always tailored to the time of year when they take place.



Marunada sweet chestnut festival

The autumn starts with the Učka Fair. Every year, more than 10,000 visitors come to Kvarner's highest mountain to enjoy a wide range of local produce and a varied entertainment programme designed to present the traditional way of life on Mount Učka. Autumn fruits are celebrated in two events dedicated to local endemic species: the Bela nedeja young wine festival in Kastav traditionally takes place

on the first Sunday in October and is dedicated to young wine made from the grapes of the area, while the Marunada sweet chestnut festival in Lovran and Opatija reveals to visitors a special variety of this sweet fruit that grows only on the slopes of Mount Učka and is distinguished by its special taste. The traditional relationship between Opatija and the capital of Austria is celebrated every



Chocolate Festival



Ball – Hotel Kvarner's Crystal Hall



Beach Party, Medveja

September during Vienna Week, when visitors to Opatija can sample typical Viennese desserts and the famous Sachertorte in local cafés, enjoy Wiener schnitzel prepared to the traditional recipe in the town's restaurants, or dance to the rhythm of the waltz at the Viennese Ball, the gala event that takes place in the Hotel Kvarner's Crystal Hall. Winter on the Opatija Riviera creates a very special atmosphere. On the days when it snows all the way down to the sea, ice skating becomes possible even right by the coast, and the best way to warm the bones is to choose from the wide range of delicious chocolate desserts on offer! For this reason, the winter programme in Opatija combines

these two activities: in December, Opatija's Open Air Theatre is transformed into an ice skating rink just steps from the sea, and is accompanied by the Christmas fair, while the Chocolate Festival takes place all over the town, inviting visitors to sample this favourite sweet prepared in a hundred imaginative ways! As a matter of fact, the Opatija Riviera is so attractive in winter that even Santa Claus cannot resist paying a visit here. Every December, he moves from Lapland to his "residence" on Mount Učka, where the snow and horse-drawn sleighs make the perfect setting for an encounter with the white-bearded Santa during the Christmas Tale in Učka Nature Park.

My Travel Tip

New Year's Toast

The New Year is always a very special period on the Opatija Riviera, for this is the time when the town, which in the past was a favourite winter resort for European nobility, reveals its particular charm. In this period, Opatija has several thousand visitors, and many more join them for the New Year's Eve Concert at the Open Air Theatre with famous musicians.



At noon on the dot on 1 January, Opatija's guests are invited to join the Mayor for the New Year's Toast on the terrace of the Hotel Kvarner with a glass of champagne. The glass has the symbol of Opatija, the Girl with the Seagull, engraved on it and can be kept as a memento of one's winter stay in the town.



Zvončari bell-ringers



Masquerade ball



Balinjerada carnival race

My Travel Tip

The Imperial Town

The Lumière brothers, who used to film in Opatija; Isadora Duncan, who danced inspired by the fluttering of palm leaves in the breeze; the Empress Sissi, who officially never visited Opatija, but used to hide here in a villa in the company of a lover – all of them, and many other famous people from the history of this town come back to life in mid-July during the Imperial Town festival, which combines music and theatre at various locations, transforming Opatija into one big stage for a fantastic spectacle with thousands of visitors.

During the event, Opatija plays host to ladies and gentlemen dressed in the most fashionable 19th-century clothes, imperial soldiers with frightening moustaches and beards, and attractive "ladies of the night" in tight corsets. This is a unique opportunity for visitors to the Opatija Riviera to become acquainted with the interesting and exciting history of the town.

Between winter and spring, it is a very special time of year here on the Opatija Riviera, locally known as "the fifth season". We are talking about carnival, when this area is turned into a winter Rio with a variety of colourful masks and numerous carnival parties that take place all over the region. The Pust, as the carnival is called in the local dialect, is an unmissable event for all lovers of the local carnival tradition. A distinctive feature of the carnival in this region are the so-called Zvončari (bell-ringers) – men wearing frightening masks and carrying huge bells, who walk the traditional routes in the hinterland to chase the bad spirits away. This traditional pageant has recently been included on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The highlight of the pageant, which lasts several weeks, is the Zvončari Festival in Matulji with thousands of spectators and several hundred participants, members of various

zvončari-groups from Croatia and Slovenia. The carnival in Opatija includes the elite Masquerade Ball, where tourists and visitors can meet diplomats and celebrities under attractive masks. Another popular event during the Opatija carnival is the Balinjerada, which every year attracts thousands of spectators. This is an original, crazy race down Opatija's main street for vehicles that run on ball bearings (locally known as balinjere – hence the name) instead of wheels. After that, carnival continues in the neighbouring coastal town of Lovran with the traditional carnival parade. Carnival in this area traditionally ends in Mošćenička Draga, when Gobo, the figure that is held responsible for everything that went bad in the previous year, is "launched to the Moon" in a wooden rocket! Spring on the Opatija Riviera symbolises the awakening of nature and man. The series of events entitled "March





Festival Kvarner

– an Oasis of Wellness”, designed to help you clear your body and mind, turns Opatija into an oasis of healthy living, with guided walking tours, outdoor exercise, and a rich offer of wellness treatments in the hotels and health centres. These include presentations of modern therapeutic techniques, massages and beauty treatments, and even traditional Chinese medicine. The area’s numerous food festivals dedicated to fresh fruit and traditional ingredients, such as Lovran cherries, wild asparagus or Kvarner scampi, invite you to experience the local cuisine. The Coffee Festival in Opatija, when the best Croatian baristas prepare this popular beverage in a variety of ways, is the perfect opportunity to let go of your daily worries and enjoy the view of the spring sun and nature awakening from one of the town’s seafront terraces. For those looking for new spiritual challenges after the “winter hibernation”, the town offers excellent cultural events such as the Independent Theatre Festival, which has been declared the best theatre festival in Croatia.

The Opatija Riviera offers a variety of cultural events in the summer too. The season starts with the spectacular Fireworks Festival in June, when the sky above Opatija lights up with magnificent artistic explosions. The Kastav Cultural

Summer turns this quaint hilltop town into an attractive destination for culture lovers, with numerous art galleries and sculptures in the open air, and numerous concerts, exhibitions, and theatrical performances taking place from June to October. Opatija’s Open Air Theatre is another favourite venue for enjoying performances by world-famous musicians in a magnificent setting and unique location between the sea and the heavens. Summer is also the time for jazz, when this musical genre can be heard all over the town during the Liburnia Jazz Festival, but also for classical music during the Festival Kvarner. Every season, there are new interpretations of classical masterpieces and modern pieces performed by top European and Croatian musicians and orchestras. A combination of culture, ethnography and sport is reflected in the regattas of traditional sailing and rowing boats that take place in Mošćenička Draga. Every boat that participates in these events is constructed in line with standards that have not changed for the last hundred years: the dozens of white sails in the waters off Mošćenička Draga are a beautiful sight not to be missed. The summer season of events ends with the Liburnia Film Festival, a national documentary film festival that takes place in Ičići right by the sea.



Liburnia Jazz Festival



Kastav Blues Festival



Open-air concert



Gastronomy

It is essential that Kvarner scampi are prepared fresh. This is why everybody involved in the chain, from the local fishermen to the skilled chefs, do their best to make sure that the meal is served quickly and professionally to the satisfaction of guests. Scampi can be served raw or marinated with a few drops of olive oil and lemon juice as appetisers, or as the main ingredient of risottos and other hot starters. However, the most famous and popular scampi dish is the buzara stew, which not only brings out their unique taste, but also their aroma.



My Travel Tip

Kvarner scampi

The dishes of the Opatija Riviera often use distinctive local ingredients, such as wild asparagus, which is not only the main ingredient of the traditional omelette but can also be combined with risottos and pastas. There are also the sweet chestnuts which give a special taste to cakes and other desserts. However, the most prized dish is definitely Kvarner scampi, which are characterised by their size and reddish colour, thin shell and particularly tasty meat.



A popular destination for gourmets

James Joyce loved to spend his time in Opatija on the terrace of the Hotel Imperial, enjoying a cup of coffee and tasting the local specialities.



The author of *Ulysses* and one of the most significant writers of the modern age was famous for his statement that he had had a good day when he had "written an entire sentence". It is therefore clear that he was a man dedicated to perfectionism. His satisfaction with the area's cuisine confirms the quality of the local food, which combines the seafood typical of coastal places that have a long tradition of fishing with the more hearty meals of the villages in the hinterland, which survived due to agriculture and raising livestock. Such a combination, which will surely satisfy even the finest gourmet palate, paired with the excellent wines of the region, has made the Opatija Riviera a renowned destination for food lovers and a place that offers the largest number of top restaurants per cap-

ita in Croatia. The area's bars and restaurants, which perfectly combine the essence of Mediterranean cuisine with typical local ingredients, proudly bear the Kvarner Gourmet quality label, and many of them have received recognition from national and international gastro guides. The small local taverns, characterised by a traditional approach to cooking and a homely atmosphere, are always popular among the food nomads who want to explore all the secrets of the local cuisine, and are marked by the Kvarner Food quality label.

The chefs of the Opatija Riviera turn the fresh local ingredients, such as wild asparagus, Kvarner scampi or truffles, into culinary artworks distinguished by their delicate, exciting taste that will surely remain in the memory of each visitor.



My Travel Tip

Opatija Camellia Cake

The Opatija Camellia Cake is a unique food souvenir of the Opatija Riviera. Visitors can savour it in local hotels and cafés, but also buy it as a present that will remind them or their friends of the tastes and fragrances of this area, as the cake remains fresh for up to thirty days. This distinctive dessert is made entirely from Mediterranean ingredients based on an original recipe that combines figs, almonds, carobs, raisins, oranges, marzipan and chocolate.



Mountain biking, Učka Nature Park

The outdoors

The area's walking, hiking and biking trails provide an excellent opportunity to become better acquainted with its beautiful natural scenery and eventful history that stretches back ten thousand years.

Enjoying the peace and quiet on the wooded slopes of Mount Učka, you will also encounter monuments to ancient cultures, such as the caves that were used by the first settlers who arrived here ten millennia ago, as well as reminders of more recent historical events like abandoned World War II bunkers. The area is also home to the important biological habitats of endemic species that cannot be

found anywhere else in the world. For the more adventurous, the Opatija Riviera offers many challenges: eight bike trails on Mount Učka and a network of hiking trails that connect the coast and the peaks of Kvarner's highest mountain and which also provide the ideal setting for learning about nature and local history. A special attraction of the area is the Trebišća-Perun Mythology and His-



Hang-gliding, Vojak peak, Učka Nature Park



Kayaking, Brseč



Free climbing, Mošćenička Draga



Hiking, Učka Nature Park

tory Trail in Mošćenička Draga, which takes visitors through locations that are of particular importance in old Slavic mythology and informs them about the mythical "divine battle" between Veles, the god of the underworld, and the supreme thunder-god Perun, presenting Učka as the holy mountain of the ancient Slavs.

Učka is particularly popular among extreme sports enthusiasts. Not many experiences can match the rush of adrenaline that one feels on taking off from Vojak, the highest peak of Učka, when paragliding or hang gliding, enjoying the stunning panorama of the entire Kvarner Bay and Istrian peninsula below. The canyon of Vela draga is a world-famous attraction thanks to its 62 climbing routes and limestone towers, which represent a

great challenge even to the most experienced climbers. However, those who succeed in climbing it will be rewarded with breath-taking views of the surrounding area. Returning from the mountain to the sea: the Opatija Riviera offers various opportunities for water sports, such as water polo, sea kayaking and canoeing, water skiing, scuba diving with experienced diving instructors, or sailing in the company of world champions. The modern sports halls in Opatija, Matulji and Kastav, are ideal for indoor sports such as futsal, handball or basketball. If you are longing for some peace and quiet, there are well-maintained trails along Opatija's Carmen Sylva forest promenade, in Loza and Lužina forests in the Kastav area, and in Matulji's protected Lisina forest park.



Windsurfing, Volosko

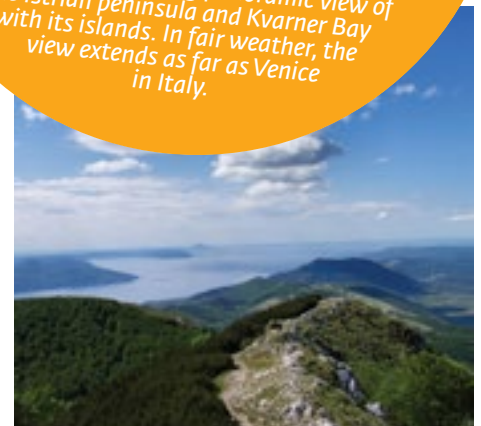
My Travel Tip

Učka Nature Park

Its particular climate has in the past determined the way Mount Učka has developed. This mountain, whose slopes "dive" into the sea, is home to many endemic plant and animal species. Due to this biodiversity and the magnificent relief of the mountain, a great part of this area has been protected as a nature park. In ancient times, Učka was the cradle of civilisation in this area. Ten thousand years ago, it was inhabited by the first groups of nomadic hunters, which is attested to by the archaeological sites of Pupičina peč and Vela peč in Vela draga. In old Slavic mythology, Učka was depicted as the home of the gods and was a holy place for ordinary people.



Every part of this mountain has its own stories that tell about the people, divinities, fairies, stunning natural scenery and interesting flora and fauna here. In addition, Učka Nature Park offers its more adventurous visitors plenty of excitement thanks to a well-designed programme and various sports and recreational facilities. The activities on offer include hiking, mountain biking, free climbing, adventure racing, paragliding, or simply walking along dozens of kilometres of well-maintained educational trails. The view from Učka's highest peak, Vojak, is particularly impressive. From an elevation of 1,400 metres above sea level, one can admire a stunning panoramic view of the Istrian peninsula and Kvarner Bay with its islands. In fair weather, the view extends as far as Venice in Italy.



The tower and view from Učka's highest peak, Vojak (1401 m)



Beach, Medveja

Beaches

"The sea is so smooth that every ship, every sail is reflected in it like in a mirror. In the sky now and then there is a cloud, light as a feather, the rest blue, sunny, not too warm and not too cold, no dust, freshness unmatched.



Natural beach, Brseč

In all honesty, I do not know any other place that would be more suitable for convalescence. Just imagine how spring in such a climate could save later travel and therapy for so many". This is how the Nobel Prize winner Henryk Sienkiewicz, one of Poland's most famous writers, praised Opatija's sea and climate.

The writer skilfully put into words the feeling that must strike every visitor to the Opatija Riviera: the

freshness and peace in the air and the waves of the clean sea will surely remove any feeling of tiredness and discontent. You will only experience total relaxation when you surrender to the area's mild climate, wonderful beaches and the delightful shade of the laurel and chestnut trees.

Every corner of the coast on the Opatija Riviera tells its own story. A jump into the sea in Volosko, the birth place of the scientist Andri-



Beach volleyball, Ičići



Beach, Medveja



Diving, Mošćenička Draga

ja Mohorovičić, is always a special experience, and the small secluded beaches among the rocks along the Lungomare seafront promenade give bathers the unique opportunity to admire the sight of Opatija from the sea after a few swimming strokes, for Opatija is definitely most beautiful when viewed from the sea. Opatija's Slatina town beach and the one in Lovran are the central bathing places in these two towns. For visitors who prefer a more modern style of enjoying the beachfront,

there are the Lido and Medveja beaches with their beach bars and after-beach parties. Families will also find a place on the local beaches: the spacious, well-maintained beaches in Ičići and Mošćenička Draga have all the necessary facilities for enjoyment all day long. If you are travelling with a pet, you don't have to worry either, for there are dog beaches in Opatija, Lovran and Mošćenička Draga for the perfect summer refreshment for your furry friend.

The seafront that stretches for several hundred metres is typical of the centre of a Mediterranean coastal town. It is by cafés and restaurants that offer a break from swimming, and the small harbour is the perfect starting point for excursions by boat. The coastal promenade is ideal for enjoying pleasant afternoon strolls in the shade of the trees and admiring the spectacular views of the Kvarner islands. The beach is particularly suitable for families with children, and also for people with disabilities, as it has a ramp for easy access into the sea and all the necessary facilities.



My Travel Tip

Sipar Beach in Mošćenička Draga

The stone pebbles shaped for centuries by the warm winds and waves of the sea are the most distinctive feature of Sipar Beach in Mošćenička Draga. Kvarner's most beautiful beach was celebrated in the verses of the renowned Croatian poet Rikard Katalinić Jeretov as a metaphor for enjoyment, freedom and carefree moments.





Wellness and health

My Travel Tip

March – an Oasis of Wellness

Spring is the time when the body awakens after a long "hibernation". This period is perfect for rejuvenating body and mind through physical activity and enjoying relaxing massages and beauty treatments. It is also the perfect opportunity to take care of one's health and benefit from professional medical consultations and traditional oriental medicine treatments. All of this is offered during the "March in Opatija – an Oasis of Wellness" event, which is historically connected to 4 March 1889, the day when Opatija was officially declared a health resort.



Everybody involved in tourism and health services takes part in this event: hotels offer attractive holiday packages dedicated to wellness and relaxation, restaurants create menus based on seasonal ingredients aimed at detoxification and healing, and sports trainers organise guided walking tours and outdoor exercise.



A unique combination of sea air and mountain climate

The first thing that you should do when you arrive in Opatija is take a deep breath and fill your lungs with the crystal clean air.

Feel the gentle aerosol rich in iodine and sea salt combined with the fragrance of the laurel and local aromatic plants, and experience first-hand the recipe for health that has been recommended by doctors since the late 19th century, when Opatija became one of the most highly rated European health resorts and a place that gave birth to many medical innovations. But even before modern medicine, Opatija's beneficial climate had been recognised by the ancient peoples who used to inhabit this area. Legend has it that the church consecrated to St. James, around which the modern town of Opatija emerged, was actually built on an old cult site dedicated to Anzotica, the Liburnian goddess of health and fertility.

After the "father of European laryngology" Leopold Schrötter von Kristelli demonstrated the medicinal effects of the highly concentrated sea aerosol in the air of Opatija, and his medical colleagues pointed out the beneficial effects of the walking paths in the surrounding wooded areas, Opatija became an imperial health resort and the second most-visited destination in the entire Monarchy after Karlov Wary. This resulted in many

renowned European doctors opening their practices here. One of them was Julius Glax, the founder of several new fields in modern medicine. Glax practiced thalassotherapy, a branch of medicine that is based on the positive effects of sea climate for treating rheumatism, joint pain, diseases of the ear, nose and throat, circulation disorders and other health issues.

The Opatija Riviera's unique mixture of sea air and mountain climate, which comes from its perfect location on the coast at the foot of Mount Učka and its numerous parks and gardens, gives visitors the chance to enjoy fresh air all day long. If you want to take the first step towards better health, it is enough to breathe deeply and spend as much time in the open air as possible. However, this region offers much more for those who want to do something positive for their health. You can benefit from the rejuvenating spa & wellness treatments and ancient oriental healing methods that are practised here, or let our excellent doctors specialising in various branches of medicine take care of your health, just like many renowned Croatian and international sporting legends and celebrities have done.



My Travel Tip

Thalassotherapy

The highlight of the Opatija Riviera's health offer is the Thalassotherapy Opatija Special Hospital for Heart, Lung and Rheumatic Diseases, which combines excellence in medicine with a superb service synonymous with tourism in this area. In addition to the necessary medical infrastructure, the Thalassotherapy Opatija also has a modern wellness centre that is one of the best in the region. Guests can find accommodation in comfortable rooms, regardless of whether they are recovering after surgery or just want to spend a few days enjoying relaxing massages, saunas and the pool.





OPATIJA

OPATIJA RIVIERA

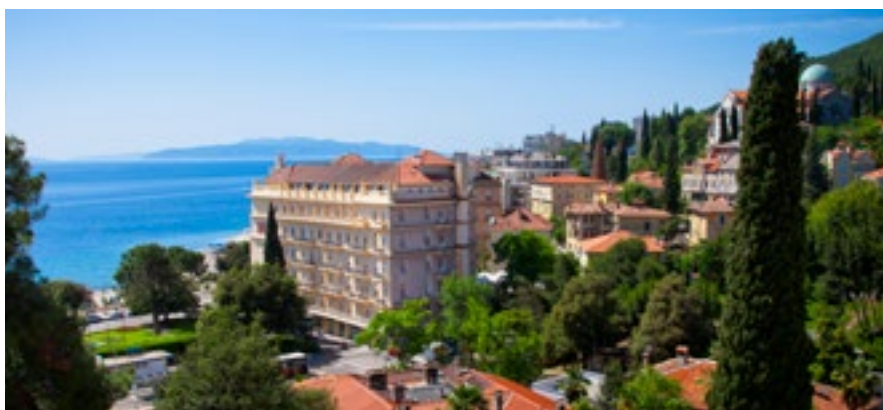
Opatija Tourist Board
TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE
HR-51410 Opatija, M. Tita 128
E tic@opatija-tourism.hr
T +385 (0)51 271 310
www.opatija-tourism.hr



Ever since the inventors of film, the brothers Auguste and Louis Lumière, filmed footage of the stormy sea in Opatija back in the early 20th century, this town has been a continuous source of creativity for the numerous filmmakers and actors who have come here to make their masterpieces or find inspiration for their performances. These include Charlie Chaplin, Kirk Douglas, Robert de Niro, or, more recently, "the best negative character actor in the world" Mads Mikkelsen, and "Lady Di" Naomi Watts. Over

time, Opatija's attractive scenery has attracted numerous celebrities to this town, so it may even happen that you encounter a movie set and spot your favourite movie star while walking through the town. The list of Opatija's famous inhabitants and visitors includes not only film stars, but also renowned scientists such as Albert Einstein and Andrija Mohorovičić, members of royalty such as the Emperor Franz Joseph, or artists such as the dancer Isadora Duncan and composer Gustav Mahler. Some of them have been immortalised in graffiti on a wall surrounding the Open Air Theatre, which has become a new tourist attraction in the town.

Throughout the year, Opatija not only offers its visitors leisure but also various creative activities in the town's museums and galleries, numerous events and concerts at the spectacular Open Air Theatre, and a wide range of wellness & spa services and facilities in its hotels. Discovering the town's cultural and historical heritage or strolling along the Lungomare coastal promenade or the Carmen Sylva forest promenade are particularly popular activities with visitors to the town, which is regarded by many as the "Queen of the Adriatic".





Volosko

The small coastal town of Volosko seems to encapsulate the true Mediterranean essence with its narrow lanes and shaded stairways, small squares and traditional houses built close to each other, colourful flowers on wooden windows, and the scent of the sea and the breeze of the tramontana wind in the air. A former fishing

village, Volosko is today home to many excellent bars and restaurants, some of which rank among Europe's finest. For visitors looking for new cultural experiences, there are galleries and art studios of renowned artists. The connection between Volosko and the arts is demonstrated every summer during the Mandrač international art colony, which brings together dozens of artists from Croatia and abroad, who create impressive ex-tempore artworks.



Veprinac

This small ancient town, which, in the words of the local poet Josip Stanić, "almost seems to touch the heavens", is located on a hill above Opatija, with the bell tower of St. Mark's Church as its recognisable landmark. Veprinac is historically important because of the Veprinac Law, which was written more than five hundred years ago, introducing monetary instead of corporal pun-

ishment. Veprinac today abounds in valuable cultural monuments. These include the small Church of St. Anne, which dates back to the mid-15th century, with its interesting Glagolitic wall paintings, the Town Loggia, where in the past decisions of importance for the entire region were issued and which today is the venue for local gatherings and concerts by traditional klapa vocal groups, the dark dungeon beneath the old town gate, and the Ethnological Collection that shows visitors how people used to live here in the past.





LOVRAN

OPATIJA RIVIERA

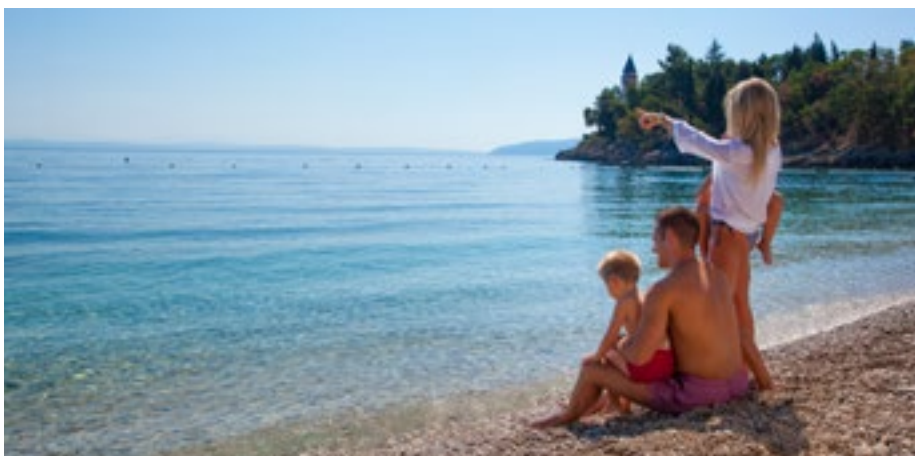
Lovran Tourist Board
HR-51415 Lovran
Trg slobode 1
E information@tz-lovran.hr
T +385 (0)51 291 740
www.tz-lovran.hr

Lovran is the oldest settlement on the Opatija Riviera, built on the spot that the Roman patrician, statesman, general and cartographer Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa chose as his residence back in the 1st century BC. Lovran first entered the history books in 799, when this area was the site of a battle between the Franks and Croats. The Frankish prince Erik was killed in this battle, which is why the hill near Lovran is named Knezgrad (which translates as Prince's Town). Centuries later, in 1680, the famous travel writer Johann Valvasor praised the people from Lovran as skilled merchants and seafarers. He was particularly impressed with the local produce: sweet chestnuts, juicy cherries and the fragrant laurel from which the town gets its name. Valvasor was not alone in his enthusiasm for these delicacies. Sweet chestnuts, cherries and laurel, as well as wild aspara-

gus, are the main ingredients of the various specialities of the local cuisine, which can be sampled all year round. In addition, there are some highly acclaimed food festivals in the area dedicated to them: the Marunada sweet chestnut festival, which has been listed among Europe's top ten food festivals by eminent international magazines, the Lovran Cherry Festival, and the Asparagus Festival.

Lovran experienced its heyday as a tourist destination at the same time as Opatija. This was the end of the 19th century and the early 20th century, when numerous members of the European nobility and other distinguished figures built magnificent villas, guesthouses and hotels here to benefit from the local climate. These buildings today still provide accommodation for visitors and are very attractive because of their distinctive architecture.

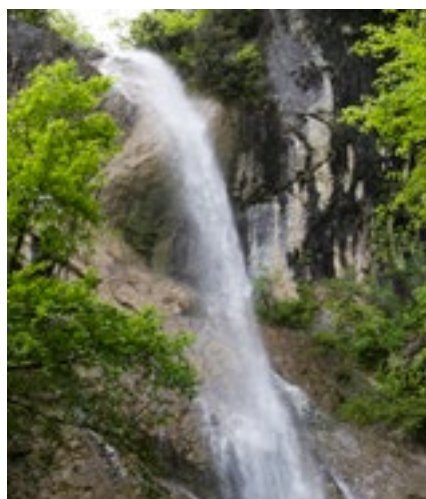




Medveja

According to Greek mythology, the sorceress Medea, the granddaughter of the sun god Helios and wife of the hero Jason, who went searching for the Golden Fleece with the Argonauts, found a beautiful beach while wandering which she could not resist. The place where she bathed in the crystal clear sea became famous across the Hellenic world and soon a new settlement

emerged here. The Greeks left these coasts a long time ago and Medea remained only in memories and myths, but the beautiful beach and the place that was named after her – Medveja – today still attract the attention of every visitor to this area. During the day, the beach is ideal for leisure and relaxation, and in the evening it becomes a centre of entertainment with attractive after-beach parties. In addition to a wide range of private accommodation, Medveja also offers a modern campsite located next to the beach.



Lovranska Draga

On a steep mountain ridge, high above the sea, lies Lovranska Draga, a quaint village that can be reached from Medveja or Lovran on the coast along interesting hiking trails that lead through wonderful natural scenery. Situated between the blue skies and blue sea, Lovranska Draga offers magnificent views of Mount Učka's highest peak and the entire Kvarner Bay, which stretches out below you. This village, traditionally dedicated to agriculture, is distinguished by its quaint vineyards that receive water from a local stream. The tradition of using exclusively local ingredients in preparing food has resulted in fantastic specialities that can be savoured only here and nowhere else in the world. The trails that lead to Lovranska Draga from the coast continue from here towards the mountain. The most famous among them is the Slap educational trail, which leads to Učka's most beautiful waterfall through an ancient sweet chestnut forest. Visitors can learn more about this endemic species through a series of interpretation boards.



MOŠĆENIČKA DRAGA

OPATIJA RIVIERA

Mošćenička Draga Tourist Board
HR-51417 Mošćenička Draga
Aleja Slatina bb
E info@tz-moscenicka.hr
T +385 (0)51 739 166
www.tz-moscenicka.hr

Emerging from the spot where Mount Učka descends into the sea, Mošćenička Draga combines the best of both worlds. Sipar Beach is one of the most beautiful in Kvarner. There are also many secluded spots along the coastal promenade, where one can enjoy the sea and sun on small natural beaches, away from the crowds and prying eyes. Over time, the people of Mošćenička Draga have created numerous pathways across the slopes of the mountain. In the past, these were used primarily as a means of communication between the villages in the hinterland and the fishing harbour on the coast, but today these paths are ideal for pleasant walks through wonderful nat-

ural scenery. The Trebišća-Perun Mythology and History Educational Trail is particularly interesting, as it gradually reveals to visitors the basics of old Slavic beliefs and mythology through the vestiges found along the trail like in a detective story. Mošćenička Draga is particularly popular among visitors looking for a peaceful, relaxing holiday. In the past, it was primarily the nobility that used to come here in their carriages from Opatija to enjoy the quiet romantic surroundings of the white fishing boats and red-roofed houses. Today, modern tourists want to recharge their batteries by spending time outdoors and swimming in the crystal clear sea. Mošćenička Draga offers them all types of accommodation: hotel rooms, a well-equipped campsite, and private accommodation in typical coastal houses. If you prefer a more action-packed holiday, Mošćenička Draga has a lot to offer: hiking, cycling, and kayaking are some of the activities that you can do during your stay here. There are also various events such as fish festivals, traditional sailing and rowing boat regattas, and events dedicated to local cuisine and specialities such as Kvarner scampi.





Mošćenice

Mošćenice is a small hilltop town in the hinterland of Mošćenička Draga. Its fortified old town, which has been included in the list of Croatian cultural heritage sites, plays host to two world championships! Every Easter, there is a traditional competition called picanje jaja, where participants try to hit an egg and pierce its shell with a euro coin from a distance of 2.8 metres. This event is very popular with the numerous visitors from all over Croatia and abroad. The other champi-

onship is dedicated to paper planes: local and foreign visitors are invited to throw paper planes of their own creation over the town walls down towards the sea. A local story has it that one competitor once managed to "land" his plane on Sveti Ivan beach, which is connected to Mošćenice by a flight of 753 steps. In addition to the opportunity to become a world champion in these unusual disciplines, Mošćenice also offers its visitors the answer to the question of how people lived in this area

in the past, as there is an interesting ethnographic collection and a working olive press (known locally as a toš), where olives are processed in the same way as hundreds of years ago. A special experience for art lovers is the Mošćenički pinel international art colony, which takes place every year at the end of August, when artists from all over Europe come to Mošćenice to paint in the lanes, on the squares and on the steps of this picturesque old town.



Brseč

Narrow lanes, small traditional houses with colourful wooden doors, ripe grapes hanging from vines and a stunning view of the sea from a 160-metre-high cliff. This is Brseč, a small coastal town that grew up around an ancient castle, and where you can still feel the spirit of medieval times as you walk up its ancient stone steps. To spend a holiday in one of the typical rural houses with their flower-decorated win-

dows offering magnificent views of the sea and Kvarner islands is always a memorable experience. The town also abounds in valuable historical and cultural monuments. The small Church of St. Magdalene, which is located outside the old town on a steep cliff above the sea, offers stunning views of Kvarner Bay. Brseč also hosts various interesting events, such as the Brseč Blues Festival.





OPATIJA RIVIERA

Ičići Tourist Board
HR-51414 Ičići
Liburnijska cesta bb
E tz-icici@ri.t-com.hr
T +385 (0)51 704 187
www.tourism-icici.hr

The sea has always been the main resource for the people of Ičići ever since the ninth century BC when the Liburnians (an Illyrian tribe) used to build their fast ships along these coasts and then sail to North Africa and Asia Minor. It is therefore no wonder that this ancient connection with the sea has been preserved right up to the present day. Today, Ičići is most famous for its attractive beach and one of the best marinas in the Adriatic. For more than a decade, Ičići beach has been awarded the Blue Flag, an international symbol of high-quality service and cleanliness, and has been listed as one of the five best-maintained beaches in

Croatia. The marina, sheltered from the northern bura wind by Mount Učka, has 283 berths with electricity and water, and is the best harbour for yachts up to a length of 40 metres in the northern Adriatic. However, Ičići offers much more than just enjoying the beach and sea. Visitors can spend an action-packed holiday doing a variety of sports activities such as speedminton, sand volleyball, beach aerobics, tennis, paintball and football at the nearby campsite. For hiking enthusiasts, there are numerous marked trails leading up to Mount Učka that start in Ičići and end at the top of the highest mountain in Kvarner.



Ika



Visitors to Ika can enjoy perfect peace and quiet – probably the most sought-after qualities on a holiday, and essential for escaping the stress of daily life. This small coastal town with a population of only several hundred is particularly proud of its fishing and shipbuilding traditions, which today make up part of the local tourism offer. Ika is also the university centre of the Opatija Riviera, as it is home to the internationally recognised Faculty of Tourism and

Hospitality Management, which has educated hundreds of students from all over Croatia and abroad.

A special event is the Fish Festival, when visitors can experience what it means to live in a coastal place like this, as they have the opportunity to help fishermen repair their nets or place the fish traps, observe the fishing boats as they set out to sea, and then taste the freshly caught fish prepared by local chefs.



MATULJI

OPATIJA RIVIERA

Matulji Tourist Board
HR-51211 Matulji
Trg M.Tita 11
E tzmatulji@tzmatulji.hr
T +385 (0)51 276 789
www.tzmatulji.hr



The three bells on the Matulji coat of arms represent the local carnival tradition and the zvončari bell-ringers, who recently gained international recognition after being added to the UNESCO World Heritage List. A remarkable sight that will introduce visitors to the magic of local carnival customs is the pageant of strong men wearing huge bells at their waists, with frightening masks and stylised maces, walking from village to village along the ancient paths in the hinterland of Matulji.

The people of Matulji have always been devoted to their local customs and traditions, and particularly proud of the way of life that seems to have become part of their genetic code. This also applies to the local cuisine, which is best presented through the "Local Food Route", in which the area's restaurants and taverns offer specialities prepared according to carefully preserved traditional recipes.

If you visit the Matulji area, make sure you try Jarbola, a wine obtained from a local grape variety distinguished by its specific taste. Matulji has always been regarded as the gateway to the Riviera, and the visually impressive building of Matulji railway station was the first sight for many distinguished travellers who used to come here on holiday in the past. If you are interested in a more action-packed holiday, the area has numerous biking and hiking trails that lead through ancient forests.



KASTAV

OPATIJA RIVIERA

Kastav Tourist Board
HR-51215 Kastav
Trg M. Laginje 5
E tzgrada.kastva@ri.t-com.hr
T +385 (0)51 691 425
www.kastav-touristinfo.hr

The town of Kastav is the former administrative, economic and cultural centre of Istria and the littoral region. It is built on a 365-metre-high hill overlooking Kvarner Bay and offers magnificent views of the Opatija Riviera. The old town of Kastav, with its distinctive architecture, is today the venue of many interesting events.

The historical importance of Kastav is attested to by the quaint old town with its town loggia and arched gateway. The Lokvina and Fortica squares are located within the former town walls that originally had nine towers, though only six have remained preserved up to the present day. The remnants of the huge Crekvina church remind us of its intriguing history that provides the source of many legends. The old town is dominated by the Church of St. Helen, which is located at the top of the hill. The numerous events that take place in Kastav all year round give this town its special feel. It is particularly worth mentioning the masked parties and ancient carnival customs, such as the traditional bell-ringers in

winter, the Bela nedeja young wine festival that celebrates the area's wine-growing and wine-making tradition every October, and the international Kastav Cultural Summer festival and the Kastav Blues Festival in summer. The latter is held in honour of "Philadelphia" Jerry Ricks, the world-famous blues musician who chose Kastav as his final resting place. This blues festival is particularly popular with many blues fans from Croatia and abroad, some of whom even schedule their holiday plans according to the dates when it takes place.

The charming atmosphere in the streets and lanes of Kastav is enhanced by the town's many galleries, art studios and museums. The Kastav Museum Collection and the local Ethnographic Museum display the area's past and traditional crafts in faithfully restored workshops, such as the Osojnak's Kettle Workshop, Viko's Coopery, and the Idica's Bakery.

If you love spending time in the countryside or just want to relax in the great outdoors, there are hiking and biking trails leading from the old town into the woods of Loza and Lužina. These trails are very popular, not only with casual passers-by but also professional athletes. For those interested in food and wine, Kastav offers several elegant restaurants and traditional taverns. Accommodation is provided in the exclusive Boutique Hotel Kukuriku and numerous private apartments.

In short, Kastav is a town of history, culture and events tailored to meet the needs of those who love to live life to the full!





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KVARNER

