



# 48 HOURS

I N D U B R O V N I K

BE CAPTIVATED BY THE MEDITERRANEAN CHARM AND  
CULINARY DELIGHTS OF THIS ANCIENT CROATIAN CITY  
SURROUNDED BY AN AZURE SEA.

words by MIRANDA LUBY

## DAY ONE

**9am** Paved with creamy marble and bookended by the impressive stone walls of the city, Stradun (the main street of Dubrovnik's old town) is an irresistibly picturesque place to begin exploring. Bustling in parts, with pockets of serenity, the town is small and pedestrian-only, making it easy to navigate as you meander in and out of the many shops and churches.

**11am** Take your time discovering the Dominican Monastery (Ulica Svetog Dominika 4). The awe-inspiring building is heavy with holy artefacts – from the silver-encased bones of saints to 16th century art, gold-embroidered robes, and it is claimed, a piece of the cross on which Jesus was crucified.

**12:30pm** Hidden inside the labyrinth of the old town's charming streets and stairways, the rooftop terrace at Restaurant Dubrovnik, with its medieval detailing and secluded vibe, is the perfect spot to relax and indulge in elegant Dalmatian and Mediterranean cuisine (Marojice Kaboge 5).

**3pm** Now that you've walked the main streets, it's time to slip on the swimmers and set off on a little 'follow your nose' exploring. Take that sunlight-dappled path framed with passionfruit vines, or climb through that intriguing hole in the old city walls, and you'll likely find yourself at one of Dubrovnik's many hidden beaches or cliff bars.

**6pm** As the afternoon melts into evening and the day cools down, climb up the narrow staircase on the west side of the old town and walk the two kilometre-long city walls. As you slowly circle Dubrovnik at roof height, passing cafes, watchtowers, forts and washing hanging against pastel walls, it transforms with the fading light of day. Locals relaxing on balconies with their evening drinks contrasts sharply with the bullet hole-riddled walls and patched-up terracotta roof tiling, remnants of the seven-month artillery siege Dubrovnik endured at the hands of the former Yugoslavian republic in the early 1990s.

**8pm** Clamber down from the ancient walls at the easternmost point and exit the old town through the soaring stone archway. Meander along the waterfront for ten minutes and find yourself at Prora Beach Restaurant at the Hotel Excelsior. It's a lantern-lit haven of intimate and elegant tables perched on a stone walkway where the softly lapping Adriatic is almost close enough to splash you, and the fish is so fresh you imagine it might have jumped straight from the sea onto your plate.

**10pm** Just around the corner you'll find Ds Books (between streets 178 and 240) where you can snap up a bargain second-hand paperback for your travels.

**FAST FACT** **There are 5433 steps in Dubrovnik; 1080 steps on the city walls and 4353 within the city**

**FAST FACT** **In 1991, more than 50 % of the UNESCO World Heritage Listed City's buildings were damaged due to an attack by the Yugoslav People's Army**

## DAY TWO

**8am** Find a table outside at Café Festival on the old town's main street. Housed in a 17th century building, it serves some of the best coffee in town and is the perfect place for a spot of people-watching.

**9am** Leave your fear of heights in the hotel and take the Communist-era cable car up to Mount Srd. The summit offers a spectacular view of Dubrovnik and the mountain's fort is home to the Museum of Croatian War of Independence. The museum chronicles the recent and bloody Siege of Dubrovnik. Disturbing video footage shows explosives, shot from the very fort the museum is housed in, raining down on the town and people below. With a new appreciation for peace and quiet, enjoy a coffee or brunch overlooking the town at Restaurant Panorama – also a great place for sunset – before descending back to sea level.

**12:30pm** Back in town, pick up some fresh local ingredients from the outdoor fruit and vegetable market in Gundulićeva Poljana Square and take a ferry from the harbour to Lokrum, a nearby green island that is brimming with peacocks. Spend the afternoon exploring the exotic botanical garden and Benedictine monastery then relish a picnic under a shady tree. Sunbathe and swim along the island's rocky coastline before catching a ferry back to the mainland.

**7pm** Dubrovnik is a Dalmatian foodie paradise and there are endless options for a sublime dinner. 360° is one of the glitziest restaurants in town offering creative cuisine on tables positioned on top of the city walls, so you can dine while peering through the battlements over the harbour (Sv. Dominika bb). Nautika is another top spot. Sit on the terrace and watch the Adriatic lap against the white city walls while you feast on the freshest of fish soups followed by chocolate soufflé with olive sauce (Brsaljce ulica 3).

**9pm** Dubrovnik nightlife is centred around the old town's main street. Visit D'vino Wine Bar (Palmoticeva ulica 4A) for its extensive selection of drinks or head to Buza (Crijevićeva ulica 9) for a candlelit vista set in a seaside cliff. And don't leave Dubrovnik without trying the local liquor – Rakija – a potent herbal spirit. □