

48 HOURS IN

Split

Yvonne Gordon explores an enticing blend of history, culture and cuisine on Croatia's Dalmatian coast.

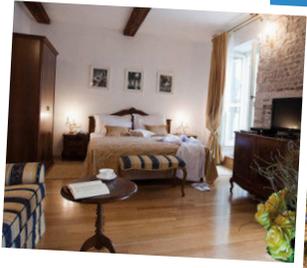


Clockwise from above, the city stretches out beneath St Dominus Cathedral; a quiet courtyard in the city centre; and an expansive room at the Palace Judita Heritage Hotel.



Sleep at ...

HISTORY Set on Split's main square in the Pavlović Palace, which dates back to the 16th century, and right beside the Diocletian's Palace, is the **Palace Judita Heritage Hotel** – a beautiful property with exposed stone walls, elegant furnishings and some rooms overlooking Pjaca. Rooms are named after legendary local figures. Double rooms from €109. (Narodni trg 4, +385 21 420 220; juditapalace.com)



BOUTIQUE **Hotel Vestibul Palace** is a tiny, luxury hotel inside the walls of the Diocletian's palace, with a mix of Romanic, Gothic, Renaissance elements such as original Roman walls. Rooms have a modern interior design and handmade furniture, as well as a pleasant outdoor terrace for drinks. Double rooms from €180. (Iza Vestibula 4, +385 21 329 329; vestibulpalace.com)

CONTEMPORARY If you're looking for a modern, five-star luxury hotel with a pool, **Hotel Atrium** is it. It's not right in the centre but is well equipped, and an interesting feature is the chance to see part of the Diocletian Aqueduct (built in the 300s) in the hotel basement. Double rooms from €160. (Domovinskog rata 49a, +385 21 200 000; hotel-atrium.hr)

Don't miss ...

VIEWS Exploring and getting lost in the streets of the 1,700-year-old **Diocletian's Palace** is a highlight but, to get your bearings and for beautiful views over the palace and the harbour, climb the 57 metre-high bell tower of **St Dominus Cathedral**. The octagonal cathedral was originally designed by Diocletian as a mausoleum and consecrated in the seventh century.

BEACHES On the southside of the palace, **Riva** is Split's waterfront promenade, the place for strolls, people watching and sunset cocktails. For swimming, head to the sandy **Bačvice Beach**, which is a short walk from the harbour. For something quieter, pack a picnic and head to one of the beaches at the foot of the forested Marjan peninsula such as Kašjuni or Kaštelet.

ISLANDS Take a ferry, boat tour or picnic cruise to one or two of the Dalmatian Islands just off the coast of Split. **Brač** is popular for its golden sandy beaches: the resort of **Hvar** is where the jet set hangs out, but has plenty of secluded beaches and coves, while **Solta** is a lovely quiet place for nature and swimming.

AER CLUB

✓ Fly to **Split** for just 10,000 Avios points.



Eat at ...

CREATIVE Tucked away in a corner of the Diocletian's Palace – in a 15th century villa – is the restaurant **Augubio Congo**. Food is traditional Mediterranean with a modern twist. Dishes might include monkfish with black truffle sauce and flavoured polenta or sea bass on a sweet beetroot cream. (Dioklecijanova 1, +385 99 323 9671)

POPULAR Set over two storeys in an old hardware store, **Bokeria Kitchen & Wine** is a large, bright dining space that has taken its inspiration from Barcelona's famous market. The menu includes everything from tapas to full

main courses, with seasonal produce and local fish, a good selection of Croatian wines and live jazz music some nights. (8 Domaldova, +385 21 355 577)

RUSTIC Down a small alleyway beside the Palace, **Konoba Varoš** is a cosy, old-style restaurant with wooden beams and fishing nets on the ceiling hinting at the seafood on offer. Sea bass, bream, stuffed calamari and octopus feature, plus an excellent choice of meats and risotto – house specialities are prepared, Dalmatian-style, under a baking lid. (Ban Mladenova 9, +385 21 396 138; konobavaros.com)

Clockwise from top left, a waterfront wander through Split; the double-height grandeur of Lvxor; Bokeria's outdoor terrace makes for the perfect people-watching spot – accompanied by one of their fresh, flaky pastries.

Drink at ...

DESIGN With everything from barbecued food to cocktails, plus a menu of more than 50 beers, **Fabrique** is a vibrant venue set in a huge space inside the old Dešković Palace, archways and beautifully designed lighting as a feature. It also turns into a late club with DJs. (Trg Franje Tudmana 3, +385 98 175 1271; fgroup.hr/fabrique.com)

CENTRAL **Lvxor** is right in the palace's central square so take a cushion and enjoy coffee or drinks on the steps for some people watching or listening to live music in the evening. The café takes its name from Luxor in Egypt as the palace was once guarded by 30 sphinxes. (Kraj Sv. Ivana 11, +385 21 341 082; lvxor.hr)

SCENIC Take a short hike up the hill of the Marjan Peninsula to here and you'll be rewarded with views of the city, the harbour and out to the islands from the outdoor terrace of **Teraca Vidilica**. (Prilaz Vladimira Nazora 1, +385 95 871 8792)

SMART FLIERS

✓ **AER LINGUS** flies from Dublin to **SPLIT** twice weekly from May.