

CROATIA BY LAND AND SEA

Small ship cruising on board MS Sea Swallow
August 31, 2020 - 15 Days



a world to experience



Fares Per Person:

\$10,075 twin, \$13,880 single Lower Deck

\$10,325 twin, \$14,310 single Main Deck



> Please add 0.3% GST.

> **Early Bookers:** \$200 discount on first 10 seats; \$100 on next 6

> **Experience Points:** Earn 157 points from this tour.

Redeem **157 points** if you book by May 26, 2020.

Includes

- Transportation to/from Vancouver airport
- Flight from Vancouver to Dubrovnik, Croatia
- Air transportation taxes, fees and fuel surcharges
- 6 nights of hotel accommodation and taxes
- Transfer from Dubrovnik airport to hotel
- Coach transportation for 6 days in Croatia
- Multilingual guide on Croatia land tours
- Guided walking tour of Old Town Dubrovnik
- Dubrovnik City Walls walk
- Srđ Mountain cable car
- Lokrum Island ferry
- 7 days and 7 nights on board *Sea Swallow*
- Port charges and cruise taxes
- Cruise gratuities
- Guided tour of Ston with wine tasting
- Guided tour of Korčula
- Guided tour of Hvar
- Guided tour of Pučišća
- Visit to the stone mason school
- Guided walking tour of Split
- Guided tour of Šibenik
- Krka National Park
- Stankovci prosciutto production facility
- Guided walking tour of Zadar
- Pag Island tour with Gligora Cheese Factory and Olive Gardens
- Plitvice Lakes National Park
- Guided tour of Zagreb
- Transfer from hotel to Zagreb airport
- Flight from Zagreb to Vancouver
- Knowledgeable Wells Gray tour director
- Gratuities for Croatia guides and drivers
- Luggage handling at hotels and ship
- **30 meals:** 13 breakfasts, 10 lunches, 7 dinners

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Wonders of Croatia

Croatia is a country at the crossroads of Southeast Europe, on the Adriatic Sea. It borders Slovenia to the northwest, Hungary to the northeast, Serbia to the east, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro to the southeast, and shares a maritime border with Italy. Its capital is Zagreb. Croatia has a population of 4.3 million. Inhabited since the Paleolithic Age, the Croats arrived in the area in the 6th century and organized the territory into two duchies by the 9th century. Croatia was first internationally recognized as an independent state in 879, then it became a kingdom in 925 which lasted for two centuries. During the 20th century, the country was called the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, the Independent State of Croatia, the Federal State of Croatia, and part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In 1991, Croatia declared independence and the War of Independence devastated the country for the next four years. Today, Croatia has a very high standard of living, and is a member of the European Union. Tourism is very important, and Croatia is now ranked among the world's top 20 most popular tourist destinations.

Croatia is best seen from land and sea, and this tour has been designed to do just that. We start with 2½ days in historic Dubrovnik. On board the *MS Sea Swallow*, we explore coastal towns like Ston, Korčula, Hvar, Šibenik, and Trogir. The ship is intimate, carrying only 36 passengers, and was built in 2019. Back on a land tour, we visit Zadar, Pag Island, Zagreb, and the awesome waterfalls of Plitvice National Park.

Tour & Cruise Notes

Please book early. The operator of the *MS Sea Swallow* has confirmed a block of staterooms for this tour. Our sales will be reviewed on January 31, 2020 and some unsold staterooms may be recalled if the ship is getting full. Small ship cruises in Croatia are extremely popular and most are sold out long before departure, so it is not a good idea to delay booking this tour. Please book as early as possible.

It is unlikely that we will be able to secure more staterooms after our unsold rooms are recalled.

Documentation: A valid passport is required with sufficient blank pages and must not expire until three months after return date. A visa is not currently required. Please bring your passport to the Wells Gray office or your travel agent to be scanned, either at booking or at the latest at final payment.

Gratuities for cruise staff and Croatia guides and drivers are included.

Currency: The Croatian Kuna is the standard currency, although the Euro is sometimes accepted in some restaurants and shops. After you arrive, you can exchange Euros at a bank or withdraw cash from an ATM which will give you a better exchange rate than a hotel. On board currency is the Kuna. Purchases can be charged to your ship account and must be paid at the end of the cruise in cash.

Rooms for singles are often a different style or smaller size than twin rooms in the hotels (not on the ship). Many hotels limit the number of single rooms allocated to a group. Only four single staterooms are available on the ship. Consider sharing a stateroom, but we may be able to book single hotel rooms. Please book early if you prefer to travel single.

Tour capacity is 34 passengers, less if there are single bookings. There are 18 staterooms on the ship.

Triples are not available on this tour.



Activity Level: Light activity on the ship and moderate activity during most shore excursions and pre- and post-cruise tours. Due to the historic nature of some attractions, it may be necessary to climb stairs, walk on uneven surfaces such as cobblestone streets, and walk up to a kilometre at an easy pace. Choose shore excursions based on your ability. Sometimes the coach cannot drive all the way to an attraction. There is no elevator on the ship and there are stairs between the dining room and your stateroom. There can be longer walks in the airports so you should request a cart or wheelchair in advance or at check-in if this could be an issue for you. The coaches and ship cannot carry a scooter. If you are not able to participate in Activity Level 2, Wells Gray Tours recommends that you bring a companion to assist you. The tour director, local guides, and drivers have many responsibilities, so please do not expect them, or your fellow travellers, to provide ongoing assistance. Please consider these mobility issues prior to booking this tour. If you are not capable of keeping up with the group or require frequent assistance, the tour director may stop you from participating in some activities or some days. In extreme situations, you may be required to leave the tour and travel home at your own expense; travel insurance will probably not cover you.

On Board *MS Sea Swallow*

Sea Swallow was launched in May 2019. With just 18 staterooms, a passenger capacity of 36, and only 4 decks, the experience is intimate and deluxe. The ship is 49 metres long. Public areas include a large salon-restaurant on the upper deck with separate bar and lounge area, VIP Saloon at the front with great views and comfortable furniture, an outside covered terrace with sitting area, and a huge partly shaded sun deck with sun beds and jacuzzi. Wi-fi is complimentary. Comfort is essential — the dress code is relaxed and casual throughout the days and nights. Wine or beer is complimentary at lunch and dinner (2 glasses per person). Two dinners are on the ship and five are on your own in the ports where we dock overnight. A shore excursion is included at each port and these are usually walking tours with a local guide providing expert commentary.

There are two categories of staterooms, either Lower Deck or Main Deck. Staterooms are equipped with air conditioning, safe, free wi-fi, satellite TV, hair dryer, and private bathroom with toilet and shower. Most luggage fits under the bed. Main Deck staterooms have a window. Lower Deck staterooms have portholes, but they are quite high up on the wall and do not have a view. Expect your stateroom to be compact in both categories. However, you will likely spend most daylight time away from your stateroom in the lounge and salon, or on deck enjoying the scenery.

Itinerary

Monday, August 31:

Transportation is provided to Vancouver Airport and our flight on Lufthansa leaves about 6 pm.

Tuesday, September 1:

Meals: D

We change planes in Munich and arrive in mid-afternoon in Dubrovnik. Welcome to Croatia! We stay two nights at the 4-star **Hotel Neptun**, located on the waterfront of the Lapad Peninsula just outside Old Town Dubrovnik. Built in 1961 and totally renovated in 2016, it boasts spectacular views of the Adriatic Sea and the Elaphiti Islands. Facilities include three restaurants, a lounge, and indoor and outdoor pools.

Wednesday, September 2:

Meals: B,D

Founded in the 7th century, **Dubrovnik** is noted for its walled Old Town and several monasteries. A local guide conducts a morning walking tour past its most famous attractions: the 14th-century Dominican and Franciscan Monasteries, and Rector's Palace. The Franciscan Monastery houses the oldest pharmacy in Europe, dating to 1317. We also walk past the Sponza Palace, dating from the 15th century and noted for its magnificent 30-metre tall tower. Admission to the **city walls** is included and you can take this exciting walk during leisure time this afternoon.

Thursday, September 3:

Meals: B,L,D

This morning, we ride the **Srd Mountain cable car** up 400 metres and admire a panoramic view of Dubrovnik and the offshore islands. This afternoon, we take the ferry to **Lokrum Island**, a park just offshore which has the ruins of a monastery and a botanical garden. There are good views of Dubrovnik from the top of the island at Fort Royal

Castle, built by the French during Napoleon's occupation of Croatia. Afterwards, we board the **MS Sea Swallow** and settle into our staterooms. Enjoy a welcome reception and the first dinner on board. The ship stays docked in Dubrovnik overnight.

Friday, September 4:

Meals: B,L,D

The morning is leisure time to relax on the ship or explore more sights in Dubrovnik. We cast off at noon and cruise north along the rugged Adriatic coast past Slano to **Ston**. The mighty fortress of Ston and its defensive walls were completed in the 15th century. This peninsula is the heart of wine country, and our tour includes a wine tasting.

Saturday, September 5:

Meals: B,L

The Island of **Korčula** is one of the greenest islands in the Adriatic Sea. Like most of the Croatian islands, the Greeks, who gave it the name Korkyra Melaina or 'Black Corfu' for its dark and densely wooded appearance, first settled Korčula. We have a guided tour of the town, admiring its typical medieval architecture such as towers and clusters of red-roofed houses. Marco Polo, the famous world-traveller, writer, and Venetian merchant was born in Korčula.

Sunday, September 6:

Meals: B,L

Hvar is one of the largest of the Croatian islands and is consistently listed among the world's top 10 islands by Conde Nast. With its colourful fields of lavender and carefully cultivated vineyards, the island is truly appealing. Carpeting the hillsides around its cozy harbour are terracotta-roofed villas, Gothic palaces and 13th-century ramparts rising to an impressive citadel. Our guided tour

visits the bell towers of the Franciscan Monastery, St. Mark's Church, and Cathedral of St. Stephen.

Monday, September 7: *Meals: B,L*

Pučića is on the island of Brač. The town is known for having a special variety of stones which were used to build part of the White House in Washington DC. We visit the only **stone mason school** in Croatia which was founded in 1909 and produces quality religious icons, fountains, and statues. This afternoon, the *Sea Swallow* cruises towards **Split**. Founded in the 2nd century BC, this is now the second largest city in Croatia and has some amazing sights with both Roman and modern architecture. Enjoy a guided walking tour through the many facades of this beautiful city.

Tuesday, September 8: *Meals: B,L*

Our day begins with a guided tour of one of the oldest towns on the Adriatic Coast, **Šibenik**. One of the highlights of this charming town is the marble Cathedral of St. James, a UNESCO World Heritage site. The afternoon is leisure time here.

Wednesday, September 9: *Meals: B,L*

Krka National Park protects the drainage basin of the Krka River. The magnificent waterfalls including the multi-tiered **Skradinski Buk Falls** are one of Croatia's most famous attractions. This afternoon, we cruise to **Trogir**, another World Heritage site. Some of its imposing buildings are the Fortress Kamerlengo, dating to the 15th century, and the 13th century Duke's Palace.

Thursday, September 10: *Meals: B,L,D*

We disembark the *Sea Swallow* in Trogir and continue touring Croatia by coach. Our next stop is **Primošten**, built in the 15th century on a small island protected by walls and towers. After the Turkish invasion of 1542, the drawbridge was replaced with a causeway. A local guide conducts a walking tour of this unique town. We continue to **Stankovci** and tour a prosciutto production facility with sampling. We stay two nights in **Zadar** at the Falkensteiner Hotel. Like many Adriatic ports, Zadar has historically been dominated by strong neighbours including the Greeks, Romans, Byzan-

tines, and Venetians (who wanted to hold off the Ottoman Turks). In more recent times, the city was invaded by the German army during World War II. As a result, Zadar presents a rich architectural and cultural history to the visitor. A walking tour visits St. Donat, an extraordinary church in the pre-Romanesque style with a high, round nave and three semi-circular apses attached.

Friday, September 11: *Meals: B,L*

We spend the day on **Pag Island**, visiting the **Gligora Cheese Factory** with cheese tasting. The famous Pag cheese is made of sage, immortelle, mugwort, cistus, Jerusalem thorn, and fennel, and salted by storms from two sea basins. Later, we go to Lun, at the northern tip of Pag Island, and visit the Olive Gardens.

Saturday, September 12: *Meals: B,L,D*

Today's highlight is visiting Croatia's magnificent **Plitvice Lakes National Park**. Sixteen terraced lakes surrounded by forest form this UNESCO World Heritage site. Numerous waterfalls cascade between the lakes which are separated by natural dams of travertine. We stroll the boardwalks for great views of this natural wonder. Afterwards, we continue to Zagreb and stay two nights at Amadria Park Hotel.

Sunday, September 13: *Meals: B,D*

The settlement of **Zagreb** by the Romans dates to the 1st century and the name to 1094. It became the new capital of Croatia after the dissolution of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. A local guide takes us on a city tour through Zagreb's Old Town, including the Opera House, St. Mark's Church and the Cathedral. The afternoon is free time. You may wish to explore the fruit and vegetable Dolac Market. A Farewell to Croatia dinner is arranged tonight.

Monday, September 14: *Meals: B*

Our flight on Lufthansa leaves Zagreb, connects in Frankfurt, and arrives in Vancouver in mid-afternoon. Transportation is provided to your Victoria area pickup point.



Tour Policies

Payments: A deposit of \$1,000 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due May 26, 2020. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined.

Discounts: Early bookers receive \$200 discount on first 10 seats and \$100 on next 6 seats for booking early with deposit. The discount is not offered after May 26.

Cancellation Policy: Up to March 26, 2020, your tour payments will be refunded less a cancellation charge of \$100 per person. From March 27 to May 26, the cancellation charge is \$600 per person. From May 27 to June 26, the cancellation charge is 60% of the tour fare. From June 27 to July 24, the cancellation charge is 80% of the tour fare. After July 24, there is no refund.

Changes to tour: As this tour has been planned nearly a year in advance, changes to foreign currency exchange rates and taxes, and surcharges from airlines, the cruise ship, and other tour suppliers can occur at any time and are beyond the control of Wells Gray Tours. For these reasons, Wells Gray Tours reserves the right to increase fares due to such changes up until the time of departure. Hotels named in the itinerary could change, but substitute accommodation will be of similar or better quality.

Travel Insurance: A Comprehensive Insurance policy is available through Wells Gray Tours and coverage is provided by Travel Guard. Policies purchased at deposit include a waiver of the pre-existing condition clause for medical and cancellation claims, otherwise policies can be purchased no later than at final payment. Please contact us for details.

Home pickups may be offered in Greater Victoria, depending on the number of people booked and coach size. Decision is made about 2 weeks before departure and you will be contacted about your pickup point and time.

Photo Credit: Croatia Cruises (MS Sea Swallow)

E-points: This tour earns 157 e-points. Each time you travel on a Wells Gray tour, you earn Experience Points, or e-points. One point equals \$1. Redeem your points on select tours or accumulate enough points to earn a free tour! Redemptions offered until May 26, 2020.

Consumer Protection BC Licences: Kamloops 178, Vernon 655, Kelowna 588, Penticton 924, Victoria 65842