You're only seconds away from a great bar, an amazing new restaurant or the latest things to do in Rijeka.

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A crash course in Rijeka

Time Out’s five-minute guide to Rijeka

CROATIA’S THIRD-LARGEST city with a population of 150,000, Rijeka has a busy port that handles million of tonnes of cargo and a quarter of a million passengers a year. It’s a lively, quirky place for a city break, during which you can enjoy the city’s fascinating history, great restaurants and kicking year-round nightlife. This is not a tourist-oriented city, which is part of its charm: in Rijeka you will be dining, drinking and dancing with locals.

The city you see around you still shows many traces of its Habsburg past. Much was destroyed by a devastating earthquake in 1756. Most monuments predating it were wiped out; hence the consistently Central-European in town.

Founded by the Romans, and Habsburg from the 1400s, Rijeka fell under Hungarian control in the late 1700s. The landlocked Magyars built a new harbour, Baroque landmarks and an infrastructure, including a railway station that still has links with Budapest.

Fiume, as Rijeka is still known to Hungarians, had no indigenous Magyar population. When their legitimacy was challenged in 1868, the Hungarians switched papers on Emperor Franz Josef at the signing ceremony, and the Slav population endured 50 more years of rule from Budapest.

As a result of the indignation expressed in the influential local newspaper Novi List, displaced Dalmatian intellectuals stirred up a groundswell of opinion that resulted in the Declaration of Fiume 1905, a call for a united land of South Slavs. It failed but it helped spread the notion of ‘Yugoslavia’ – one that would come to fruition after World War I.

A couple of roads away from the old town lies Trsat Castle, a Hill Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, the forerunner of Yugoslavia. The border between Fiume and Split ran along the waterway near the Hotel Continental, which still stands today.

After World War II, Rijeka industrialised under Tito, and Italian influence waned. Its main street remained the pedestrianised cafè-lined Korzo, parallel to the harbourfront Riva. Its Habsburg façades faded behind modern shops and edifices. Just juxtaposed with working-class Rijeka, beyond lay Opatija, the Queen of Adriatic resorts, today easily reached by regular bus.

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Anyone visiting Rijeka in the early 1900s would have found a complete mix of nationalities, with Italians in the majority – it was there that later New York mayor Fiorello La Guardia served in public office at the start of his career. Along with Croats, Slovenes and Hungarians, an Englishman, Robert Whitehead, had made his name by inventing the torpedo here.

Like its near neighbour Trieste, main port for the Austrian Navy, Rijeka, main port for the Hungarian Navy, had coveted access to the Adriatic.

With the collapse of the Habsburg Empire after the war, the Hungarian governor fled his magnificent palace, and in marched Italian patriot, pilot and poet Gabriele D’Annunzio with 200 soldiers to proclaim ‘Fiume’ as Italian and his own state.

From the stately Governor’s Palace, D’Annunzio would have seen the battleship sent by Rome in 1920. Italian forces duly chased him out to control Fiume while the neighbouring community of Sušak was overthrown by the newly formed Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, the forerunner of Yugoslavia. The border between Fiume and Split ran along the waterway near the Hotel Continental, which still stands today.

Urban tourism has been boosted by February’s carnival, a huge Mardi Gras parade preceding Shrove Tuesday.

Rijeka has realised the need to offer visitors enough to stay in town and not head off to the nearby islands – at least not straight away. Attractions include the newly relocated Museum of Modern & Contemporary Art, a clutch of fine restaurants and historic landmarks such as Trsat Castle and the Capuchin Church.

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TEN YEARS AGO anyone who described Rijeka as the sleeping giant of Croatian tourism would have been considered frankly bonkers. How could a post-industrial city of container ports and cranes compete with Dubrovnik’s medieval walls, or the imperial Roman heritage of Split? Mention Rijeka today, however, and the response is rather different: the 130,000-strong port city on the cusp of the Kvarner Gulf is seen as a refreshing alternative to the brochure-hogging showcases elsewhere. The city’s industrial heritage is now seen as an asset rather than a hindrance, and with it gearing up to become Rijeka 2020 European Capital of Culture, there’s a palpable feeling that this is a place whose time is, if not exactly now, at least steaming into port at a rate of knots.

Rijeka has long identified itself through its industries – primarily shipbuilding, although armaments, tobacco and paper have also played a role in a grand, which there’s much there’s been history of welding, riveting, rolling and balling. None of the tourism booms of the last 100 years had much of an impact on a city that was a transatlantic hub travellers breezed through on the way to somewhere else – the beaches of Istria, or the summer holiday islands of Cres, Loinj and Rab.

The city has always been a hub of technological innovation, alternative culture, bold architecture, and a literary tradition with a distinct modern voice. It’s also one of the most culturally diverse cities in Croatia, with a long-established Italian minority and a history of immigration from all over the former Yugoslavia. Rijeka’s upcoming stint as European Capital of Culture has thrown all of this into sharp focus, allowing the city to present itself as a post-industrial success story from which others have a great deal to learn. The cultural calendar for 2018 and 2019 has already been packed up and enhanced in order to provide Rijeka with a platform for the big year itself – and to provide the city with a spread of sustainable events that will keep on going long after the European Capital of Culture 2020 shindig has come to an end.

The key infrastructure project linked with 2020 is the revitalization of the Benčić complex, a cluster of ex-industrial buildings just opposite the main railway station. Having served at various times as a sugar refinery, tobacco factory and tractor plant, this moody, handsome cluster of plaster and brick is currently being redeveloped to provide an integrated home for the city’s key cultural institutions – the municipal library, the Rijeka City Museum, and the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art. The latter has moved into one of the former factory halls already, providing an early glimpse of the city’s emerging potential, not only as a city of the arts in its own right, but also as coastal Croatia’s only real rival to Zagreb in the creative energy stakes.

In a way Rijeka is an easy shoe-in for the title of “Croatian Manchester”, a hard-gving contrasting city whose position just outside the centralized currents of national life has earned it a semi-detached yet vital place in the nation’s popular culture. It was Rijeka after all that served as the birthplace of Croatian punk – the first-ever punk concert in communist-ruled Europe was held by local band Paraf in summer 1977. The city went on to spawned so many punk, electro-pop and indie bands that local impresario and record producer Goran Lisica-Fox compared Rijeka to the Galapagos Islands in terms of the number of endemic musical species it produced. Somehow buzzy saw-guitars and blustering melodies constitute the real folklore of the city; even today, Rijeka is the only place outside Zagreb that has a live music scene of any regularity. Rijeka’s abrasive-as-sandpaper glamour is a key ingredient

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However to portray the rise of Rijeka as just another ugly duckling story would be only telling the half of it. It is also a vavacious Mediterranean city of pavement cafés, pedestrianized promenades, evergreen parks, and even (if admittedly a bit sadly) a bus-side away from the centre isomer rather excellent beaches. Life is lived outdoors for much of the year, summer nights can be long, exhilarating affairs. And when it comes to Croatian food, Rijeka is one of the best places to eat in the country. The concept of the bistro as a place that serves good local food at democratic prices is something of an urban tradition here, and regional idiosyncracies (hand-rolled pasta, goulashes of traditional meats and seafood) are still part of the day-to-day repertoire. Rijeka’s central market is arguably the most exciting and evocative in the whole of Croatia, housed in Art Nouveau pavilions that stand in tribute to the city’s erstwhile commercial might.

Enlivened by the glistening rainbow colours of its seafood, and the pungent cheeses and home-cured meats of the hinterland, the market is like one huge, high-quality delicatessen.

A final but essential part in Rijeka’s complex riviera-meets-realty jigaw is provided by the resort town of Opatija, just up the coast, and near enough to be considered a luxury suburb. Opatija began life in the late nineteenth century as the Adriatic’s first planned holiday paradise, and still radiates great charm, gilded by the residual glamour of its playboy-meets-playgirl heyday. It was proximity to Opatija and its ample supply of hotels that had a dampening effect on the development of tourist industry in the city itself, as Rijeka was ordained to remain perpetually in the shade of its swanky neighbour.

Despite being right next to the oldest and most over-written tourist resort in the country, Rijeka still has the seductive feel of something undescoped, unfairly overlooked, or to use the buzzword of today’s travel writers, authentic. To borrow a musical metaphor, the eternal support act has finally woken up to the fact that it is actually at the top of the bill.
Events

Edited by Justin McDonnell
Timeout Ltd (c) Croatia. Rijeka. Things to do

JULY

Summer Cinema at Art-Kino
This eighth edition of the open air cinema program run by Rijeka’s cinema Art-Kino, the envy of many a Croatian city, with its repertoire of cult classics and world cinema. This year, the accent is on European films, featuring Ingmar Bergman’s ‘Summer with Monika’ and European films, featuring Ingmar Bergman’s ‘Summer with Monika’ and
American singer-songwriter Chelsea Wolfe brings the fuzzed-up Goth-noise-metal of her 2017 album Hiss Spun to the outdoor stage of Trsat Castle. With much-touted Belgian post-hardcore trio Brutus in support, it looks being like quite a night.

RE:EASA 2018
A two-week international conference of architecture students and young architects. Around 500 young participants will take part in 30 workshops whose topic is specifically created without a language barrier, intending to be one of the chief cultural activities in Central Europe.

Rijeka Torpedo
The official test-launch of the world’s first ever torpedo took place in Rijeka in 1866. The revolutionary new weapon was the brainchild of English engineer Robert Whitehead, who took an original idea from local colleague Giovanni Biajlo Luppi, perfected it, and put it into production in what was to become one of the chief naval armaments factories in Central Europe. Curated by Giovanni Biajlo Luppi, the exhibition was initially intended to run for one summer, but was kept in situ due to enormous popular interest. Occupying the vast halls of a former factory and warehouse, it’s an impressive and atmospheric affair, with torpedoes stretching the ages, vintage film and photographs, and a wealth of surrounding information.

Summer On Gradina
This year’s eighteenth Summer On Gradina consists of six conceptual events followed by a programme of music, theatre and art. Summer On Gradina is a great opportunity to experience performance and activity within the Trsat Castle and is specifically created without a language barrier, intending to be enjoyed by visitors from any nation.

JUNE 15 - AUGUST 25
The Furioza Cycle
Running from mid-June, this fantastic series of concerts are exclusively performed by female artists. Covering a baffling array of musical styles, the concerts offer opportunities to visit some of Rijeka’s unique performance venues. On Wednesday 1 August, from 8 pm at Trsat Castle, Californian singer and songwriter Chelsea Wolfe and her band visit as part of their largely international tour. Combining folk music, heavy metal, electronic and gothic music styles, she has released five critically acclaimed albums and has music videos across five continents. Chelsea Wolfe brings the fuzzed-up Goth-folk-noise-metal of her 2017 album Hiss Spun to the outdoor stage of Trsat Castle.

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Chelsea Wolfe + Brutus
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The 2nd Biennale of Industrial Art: On the Shoulders of Fallen Giants.
Initiated two years ago in the former mining town of Labin southwest of Rijeka, the Biennale of Industrial Art spreads its wings this year with key-note exhibitions in Labin and Rijeka and a host of satellite events in Pula, Vodnjan and Rata. Themes decline of industry, the rise of tourism, working-class history, and regional identity. The fact that the MMSU is specifically created without a language barrier, intending to be one of the chief cultural activities in Central Europe.

BeoVrećo
Bošnian singer Vrećo is one of accounts - the leading modern interpreters of sevdalica, the bitter-sweet songs of yearning and dashed hopes that form a central thread through the folk traditions of the region. Vrećo wears both male and female
**Rijeka Carnival**

Croatia’s biggest carnival takes place in Rijeka, culminating in a colourful procession of thousands on the Sunday before Shrove Tuesday. The Carnival tradition dates back centuries, when it was a festival to welcome the coming of spring. Then, as now, masques were elaborate and ugly, and evil spirits were sent packing by local men dressed in animal skins, the zvončari, clanging huge cowbells. By tradition, the bell-ringers clang their instruments and move in steps according to their village of origin. Then, two weeks before Shrove Tuesday, on the Saturday lunchtime, the Children’s Parade runs through the streets of Rijeka. The big event, however, is the International Carnival Parade, which kicks off at noon on the following Sunday. It usually takes the whole weekend's activities. Subsequent celebrations last well into the night, at stalls and tents set up around the canal.

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**JANUARY 17 - MARCH 6**

**Rijeka Carnival**

**Rijeka Advent**

The first of December marks the first day of Advent in Rijeka, the city’s yuletide festival-on-sea. Featuring German-style Christmas markets, canopies of twinkling lights, Santa and concerts in the Kožiner Square, Rijeka’s Advent is a joyfully local affair, with several festive hubs set across the city. Last year saw a new addition to the programme, Advent on Gradinska, transforming the ancient Gradinska into a fairy-tale winter setting, accompanied by an atmospheric programme of live music and shows.

**SEPTEMBER**

**Red Carpet**

The Vienna-based Red Carpet art award, traditionally considered one of the most prestigious prizes for young European artists, guests in Opatija with an exhibition of this year’s nominees.

**History Film Festival**

International documentaries focusing on the big events and personalities of the past, with the accent on mainstream narrative film-making rather than the experimental.

**PORTO ELENO**

A music and food festival that celebrates diversity, with particular emphasis on the ethnic minorities that live in Rijeka and the surrounding region. It’s a family event with communities presenting folklore, cuisine and crafts – with the added attraction of local and international world-music acts closing the proceedings on each of the two evenings.

**OCTOBER**

**Impulse Festival**

A series of club gigs, exhibitions and round-table discussions with an indie-culture theme, kicking off this year with Irish post-rock veterans God Is an Astronaut, performing in Pogon culture on the festival’s opening night.

**STIFF Student International Film Festival**

Shorts, experimental films and debut features from student or first-time directors.

**NOVEMBER**

**Prljava Kazičište**

Veterans of the Zagreb new wave scene who went on to become an anachronistic pop-rock attraction. Prljavo Kazičište (“Dirty Theatre”) are something of an institution in Croatia, and look set to attract an enthusiastic, sing-along audience.

**TROGadolitude**

The festival’s opening night.

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**OCTOBER**

**Impulse Festival**

A series of club gigs, exhibitions and round-table discussions with an indie-culture theme, kicking off this year with Irish post-rock veterans God Is an Astronaut, performing in Pogon culture on the festival’s opening night.

**STIFF Student International Film Festival**

Shorts, experimental films and debut features from student or first-time directors.

**NOVEMBER**

**Prljava Kazičište**

Veterans of the Zagreb new wave scene who went on to become an anachronistic pop-rock attraction. Prljavo Kazičište (“Dirty Theatre”) are something of an institution in Croatia, and look set to attract an enthusiastic, sing-along audience.

**TROGadolitude**

The festival’s opening night.
It’s carnival time!

Every winter, the streets of Rijeka are taken over by a communal costume pageant, attended by some 100,000 revellers. Peterjon Cresswell tells the story of Croatia’s biggest carnival.

MANY CITIES celebrate Mardi Gras. Rio, Venice and New Orleans have long been known for their pre-Lenten processions, a tradition harking back to medieval Europe, pagan rites and the casting out of winter.

With Rijeka’s deep-water port coveted by both Venice and Vienna, and the town full of medieval intrigue, the city authorities banned the wearing of masks, at carnival or any other time, in 1449.

But Rijeka has always had a rebellious streak. Isolated groups continued the tradition over the centuries before, in 1982, with a nod to history and an eye for a party, three of them decided to revive the concept of a city carnival. Lakoćemo, Pehinarski čerti and Halubajski Zvončari donned masks and paraded through the streets around the time of Mardi Gras, attracting a few hundred friends and curious onlookers.

Pretty soon, these numbers had run into the thousands and the groups into the dozens. In 1995, Rijeka was included in the Federation of European Carnival Cities. By 2001, there were...
well over 100 groups and organisers had to limit numbers. More than 100,000 visitors still flock here in February, transforming Rijeka from port to party zone, focus falling on the main parade along the Korzo.

So what’s it all about?
The first thing to know about the Rijeka Carnival is that it’s more than just the Rijeka Carnival, the showcase procession that takes place on the Sunday before Shrove Tuesday. The season starts in January, with the presentation of the master of ceremonies, Meštar Toni, and the election of the Carnival Queen, who oversee proceedings during the course of the event. Leading local celebrities also gather in the Governor’s Palace for the annual charity ball.

Apart from the main procession, the most popular part of Rijeka Carnival is the Children’s Parade, involving local schools and nurseries, and youngsters from around Croatia and the region. Then comes the Sunday march. The second thing to know about the Rijeka Carnival is that it doesn’t just involve locals dressed up in weird costumes, making random clanging noises. These bellringers, zvončari, are divided into scores of different groups, each coming from a different part of the Rijeka area, each with its own tradition, costume and ritual. The tradition of Zvončari from the Kastav region with Halubajski Zvončari (Bellringers of Halubje) were added to UNESCO’s list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2009.

Harking back to the first modern-day carnival of 1982, the Halubajski Zvončari hail from Halubje, at the western end of the Kastav region. These are the ones whose masks most typify the carnival, bizarre animal heads with horns and red tongues.

The Zametski Zvončari come from Zamet, between Rijeka and Kastav, who model their look on vikings, with a red bandana and large antlers on their sheepskin helmets. Following behind a flag, they walk by crisscrossing one another, each ringing the large bell he carries. Dating back centuries, the Grobnički Dondolaši were originally Grobnik shepherds, armed with the wooden rattles, škrebetalnica, at carnival time. ‘Dondolaš’ refers to their bells, doodle. Employed by well-to-do landowners to protect their cattle, this group is well versed in making a racket to scare off predators.

Other groups have other hallmarks. The Griški Krabunosi come from a wine-growing area and made their masks from whatever they could find lying around their cellars. They also put music to the fore – although the group’s motto, ‘The uglier the better’, leaves the onlooker in no doubt as to their fearsome reputation. The Munički Zvončari from the twin villages of Vele Mune and Male Mune near the Slovene border stand out because of their hopping march, the paper roses on their hats and the fact that they include women in their group. The Pesniki see off the dreaded winter with dancing and merriment, their group from Crni Lug traditionally featuring an accordion player, their parties tending to go on the longest and latest.

Once in Rijeka, groups gather to set off on an route. The parade then follows a set route, taking its own sweet time as it passes along the Korzo where the bulk of the crowds are. The last group to pass by are usually the Halubajski Zvončari, a few hours after nightfall. A puppet, the Pust, is then burned in ritual fashion, which is the signal for everyone to get down and start partying. DJs set up on the Korzo, and in many bars and clubs, the festivities continue long into the night.


‘More than 100,000 visitors still flock here in February, transforming Rijeka from port to party zone.’
DAMIR MARTINOVIC MIREL, bassist with local alt-rock institution Let 3, once told Time Out that Rijeka was the kind of place where “rock music was in the genes, passed on from one generation to the next”. Rijeka certainly has an enviable track record in churning out post, punk, electro-pop and alt-rock, a track record that no other city in Central Europe can quite match. If the average Rijeka souvenir shop did sell a doll in folk costume, it would be sure to have an electric guitar dangling round its neck.

**Paraf**

Although Rijeka had a respectable rock scene prior to 1977, it was really the emergence of punk that put the city on the musical map. Local group Paraf were not only the first Croatian punk band, they were also the best Croatian punk band, producing a sonic barrage of songs that featured sharp-as-a-razor riffs, anthemic hooks, and lyrics that had a decidedly ambiguous relationship with the communist-but-conservative society of the epoch. Having laid down a punk template for everyone else to follow, Paraf subsequently metamorphosed into a very different, but equally inventive, New-Wave power-pop outfit.

Standout track: *Narodna pjesma* (National Anthem; 1978)
**Rijeka Rocks**

In this article, we delve into the vibrant music scene of Rijeka, Croatia, exploring a range of bands that have contributed to the city's rich musical heritage. From the synth-pop pioneers of the 1980s to contemporary indie acts, the city has seen a diverse array of musical expressions that mirror its multicultural landscape.

### Deniz i Denis

The synth-pop boom of the 1980s took former Yugoslavia by storm, and Deniz i Denis, led by Marina Perazić and Davor Tolja, were at the forefront. Their debut album, *Profesor Jakov* (Teacher James; 2000), is their most radio-friendly hit. Standout track: *Crne rukavice* (Black Gloves; 1987).

### My Buddy Moose

Another band that sings in English and does so rather well, My Buddy Moose are Croatia's prime practitioners of bittersweet indie, jangle pop and alt-country - although they seem to be rooted to the spot or squealing for the exits. They were famously uncompromising on stage, denoting huge phalluses, barring their buttocks on Sunday-afternoon TV, or peppering their songs with politically incorrect vulgatures. They might look like a circus act but Let 3 are also the most convincing alternative rock attraction that Croatia has ever produced, moving from hard riffing punk through indie pop to rock-electro fusion with an ease that no other group from the region can muster. Standout tracks are too numerous to mention; *Riječke pičke* ("Rijeka c*nts"); 2005) is a mischievously ironic local-patriotic anthem; *Profesor Jakov* (Teacher James; 2008) is their most radio-friendly hit.

### Nipplepeople

With strutting bass lines, strident synthesizers and a knowing nod to operatic drama, Nipplepeople are a glutiously unapologetic throwback to the Rijeka electro-pop of the 1980s. They're as much an art project as a band, concealing their identities behind extrava-gant costumes, kinky fetish gear and kooky masks. Their standout track: *Příša* (Situation; 2017) is a radically re-worked cover of Zdenka Kovačček's 1984 synth-soul number of the same name.

### Urban & 4

Vocalist Damir Urban is one of the long-term fixtures of the Rijeka scene, having lent his lyrical songwriting talents and operatic vocal style to some of the most underrated bands of the late Eighties, Lauter, before forming his own outfit Urban & 4. Coming at the end of a decade deformed by war and transition, their 1999 album *Zena Dijete* was one of those impeccably crafted, sophisticated alt-rock records that helped the Croatian rock scene believe in itself again. Standout track: *Mala Truba* (Little Trumpet; 1999).

### Termiti

Best of the numerous bands that came in Paraf's wake, Termiti were responsible for writing Vjeran Pas (Faithful Dog), the most memorable single song of the punk era and an enduring alternative hymn. "The only way to get through life/ is as a faithful dog" goes the ironic refrain. Termiti were also famous for their live performances, with vocalist PeđaKraljević Kralj famously performing with a toilet bowl on his head. Termiti bassist Damir Martinović Mrle went on to co-found Let 3, taking the song "Vjeran Pas" with him – it still very much part of Let 3's live set. Standout track: *Vjeran Pas* (Obedient Dog; 1980).

### Jonathan

Current darlings of the Croatian pop-rock scene, Jonathan are a consummate distillation of just about everything that has happened in guitar-driven rock from U2 to The National. Their videos have a choreographed sheen that puts most other Croatian production in the shade. They have always sung in English, so there is no excuse not to investigate their oeuvre further. Standout track: *Pictures* (2014).

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**Time Out Rijeka for Visitors 2018**
Reading Rijeka

Jonathan Bousfield reflects on Rijeka’s literary scene and offers his essential reads.

When it comes to world literature, Croatian cities don’t always come off at their best. Toss names like Dubrovnik, Zagreb and Split around in your head, and it’s unlikely that any novels will come immediately to mind. Rijeka, with its dockside warehouses and hulking barge-tower blocks, looks as if it would make the ideal setting for a best-selling crime novel – if only someone would get around to writing it. However, Rijeka does have the advantage of having produced several significant literary figures, ensuring that this is one Croatian city that does at least come with a worthwhile reading list. One ought to start with Daša Drndić, whose death in June 2018 provoked an outpouring of tributes, revealing just how major a European writer to break out into the English-speaking world, Drndić is the biggest contemporary name in what is an active and ebullient local scene. Younger-generation writers are represented by informal collectives such as Ri Lit, who organize events and arrange writing workshops. Readings and book launches take place in literary hangouts such as Book Café Dnevni Borac, or in the cult second-hand bookshops Mali Neboder and Ex Libris, both of which are a bibliophile’s dream. Big regional names attend Visiak, the week-long literary festival held each May, while a more international roster of scribblers and charlatans come to town for the Festival of the European Short Story, co-hosted by Zagreb and Rijeka, in June. One younger-generation writer to break out into the English-speaking world is Tea Tulić, whose Hair Everywhere (translated by Coral Petkovich) was published by London’s Serìos Books in 2017. An experimental, fragmentary novel that’s not at all difficult to read, it offers an engaging picture of family life in the Rijeka of today, full of vivid imagery and insightful observations. Somewhat edgier than Tulić are the short stories of Enver Krivac, who conjures a post-party pre-breakfast time phantasmagoria of marginal characters who still seem emphatically local, as if they could be walking down Rijeka’s Korso or sitting in one of its cafes at this very moment. His short piece From the Waiting Room is available online (www.eurolitnetwork.com/litlink-from-the-waiting-room-by-enver-krivac-translated-by-martin-mayhew). It’s impossible to read or write anything about Rijeka without being aware of the long, proto-fascist rule over Rijeka in 1919-1920. Siastic supporter of Gabriele D’Annunzio’s fascist rule over Rijeka in 1919-1920. However Comisso’s portraits of a tumultuous Mediterranean city of beautiful women and handsome young men (Comisso was a hands-on connoisseur of both) would still speak to us today were they available in any other language than his native Italian. Here is Comisso talking about Rijeka in the months immediately prior to D’Annunzio’s arrival: “The city abounded with beautiful girls, the pastraskites were overflowing with extraordinary sweets. Vast cafes offered all kinds of illustrated magazines, the most delicious zabaglione imaginable, drinks made from fruit syrup, coffee with cream, all served by the most obsequious waiters. Shops were full of perfumes from all corners of the world, the port was filled with Italian, English and French warships; every evening the locals invited the officers to house-parties which lasted well into the next day; we ate, we drank, we drank, it really did seem as if this was a city overflowing with possibilities, a reward for everything we had endured during the war.” Although we should be in no illusions about the political context of Comisso’s writings, it’s difficult to see how a contemporary travel journalist could ever do better.
An alternative tour of Rijeka

Take an unusual trip to Rijeka’s most remarkable places

IN ORDER TO PICK AWAY at the complex layers of Rijeka’s history and culture you sometimes need to get away from the canonical tourist sights and roam further afield, taking in some of the idiosyncratic and often unsung attractions that reveal stories that aren’t always adequately told in the set-piece museums. What follows is a list of the kind of locations that have something to say about the city’s complicated psychogeography. Although some of them are a bit far-flung and might require a bus ride or a taxi, most are walkable from the centre and offer excellent opportunities to savour the mixture of residential, park-side and industrial neighbourhoods that give the city on the Kvarner its unique character.

The Church of St Romuald and All Saints

Rising above Kozala Cemetery to the east is the soaring spear-like tower of the city’s most remarkable church, St Romuald’s, built by the Italians during the 1930s to serve as a memorial to the Italians, built by the Italians during the 1930s to serve as a memorial to the Italians who died in World War I. The church itself functioned as both a focal point for Italian war graves and a celebratory symbol of Rijeka’s forced incorporation into Italy. Architect Bruno Angheben opted for a lean functionalist style incorporating elements of Futurism, producing an edifice that’s an outstanding representative of its epoch, and still functions as a Croatian Catholic church today.
Kozala Cemetery
The torpedo man Robert Whitehead built a mausoleum for himself and his family in Kozala, the city’s main cemetery on a hillside above the centre. Whitehead ended up being buried in a Sussex churchyard, but his intended palace of rest is still here, a monumental Art Nouveau pyramid that looks down on Kozala’s other grand tombs from the graveyard’s highest point. And if you’ve ever been taken by the idea of cemeteries as public parks, then Kozala is one of Europe’s finest, with soaring poplars, lines of neatly clipped hedge, and a sprinkling of palm trees providing an air of Mediterranean luxuriance.

Punk Paraf
Heading downhill from Kozala, on a stepped alleyway that runs down towards Vladimir Nazor park, the words “Punk Paraf”, suddenly appear beneath your feet in wavy streaks of white paint. This act of teen vandalism was carried out by members of Croatia’s first-ever punk group Paraf in the summer of 1977, somehow surviving to become the preserve of cultural-heritage preservationists four decades later. Repainted in 2018 it looks far too bright to a true relic of Rijeka’s new wave; hopefully it will be scuffed back to authenticity by the ongoing passage of feet.

Rijeka Astronomy Centre
Situated on high ground east of the centre (bus 7a or taxi will get you there), the Astronomy Centre is home to a small observatory and a planetarium offering regular shows about life, the universe and pretty much anything else that suits itself to rich visual effects. English-language performances are given on Wednesday evenings. The structure itself is an ambitious adaptation of an Italian anti-aircraft emplacement built in World War II, another example of Rijeka’s appetite for repurposing the architectural fragments bequeathed to the city by past masters. The centre’s Café Galileo has a fabulous rooftop terrace with sweeping views of Rijeka and the Kvarner Gulf.

Mosque, Rijeka Islamic Centre
Arguably the finest contemporary building you are likely to see in Rijeka, if not anywhere on the Adriatic, the city’s stunning new mosque looks more like a science-fiction illustrator’s idea of a base on the moon than any public building you might have so far seen in Croatia. Built to designs by abstract sculptor Dušan Džamonija, it takes the form of a silvery fragmented dome – as if a Chocolate Orange is being pulled slowly apart so you can see the segments sliding away from each other. With a boldly geometric minaret corkscrewing upwards to one side and the blue Adriatic in the background, it’s a genuinely thrilling sight.

Galeb
The battered grey boat moored at the end of Wenzelova has a rather more illustrious history than might first appear. Built in 1938 for an Italian fruit-shipping company (when it was, quite literally, a banana-boat), the vessel saw service as a German minesweeper in World War II before being sunk, salvaged, and reconstructed to serve as a Yugoslav navy training boat. Its period of glory came when, renamed Galeb (Seagull), it entered service as the presidential yacht of Josip Broz Tito. Tito visited Britain on the Galeb in 1953, and frequently used the ship to entertain visiting heads of state. A Greek businessman bought the ship in the late 1990s and sent it to Rijeka for repairs. When it became clear that he couldn’t pay the bill, the city of Rijeka took it over. It is now set to become a floating history museum, but given the controversial heritage of Tito - a hero to some, a monstrous dictator to others – the Galeb itself looks set to remain an ambiguous symbol to say the least. The Galeb is undergoing refurbishment this year but its opening is scheduled for 2020.
**Made in Rijeka**

Stylish, fun and totally unique: we round up five Rijeka-made creations from local designers and artisans.

**Svjetlana Despot**

Of the four main designers currently being showcased at BuRa Design Store, all are Croatian, but none are from Rijeka. However, Rijeka design does have perhaps the biggest impact here thanks to the actual store design by famous local interior designer, Svjetlana Despot. These Despot designed felt boxes are sturdy, multi-purpose pieces. This small and striking blue edition would be perfect sat atop a table, holding keys or pens. They come in a variety of colours, designs and sizes. To large boxes you can even put a lamp or newspapers, says store owner Paula Knapić. ‘For instance, we put a Christmas tree in a large box for the holidays.’


**Bruketa necklace**

Little Gallery is probably the most famous small art gallery in Rijeka and has been run by the Bruketa family for over 40 years. ‘If visitors want to buy something in Rijeka and they want it to be something unique, you should definitely go to Little Gallery,’ recommends BuRa’s Paula Knapić. This unique Bruketa necklace, currently available at BuRa, is made of rubber and felt. Bruketa have several others designs available here using a combination of lightweight materials including wood, rubber and felt.

[ruja-galerija.hr](http://ruja-galerija.hr)

**Amna Šehović bag**

Amna Šehović is the owner of Šta Da? Not only does she design and make about 90 percent of the items in her store, you can usually find her taking one of the day’s shifts at the store counter, tinkering with new projects in between guiding visitors around her wares. Amna is passionate about recycling. ‘The blue rubber used for this bag previously had some industrial use; its brilliantly contrasting brown scars come from chafing against chains in its former life.’

[Happyhobbyshop.blogspot.com](http://Happyhobbyshop.blogspot.com)

**Kisha umbrella**

Kisha describe themselves as the world’s smartest umbrellas. And they may be right. The company comes from Rijeka and with the city’s annual rainfall equivalent to that of Manchester, UK, there’s a need to have an umbrella to hand lest you be caught in a shower. However, umbrellas, like sunglasses, appear to be one of those items we’re just prone to losing. This high-end product counters that by coming equipped with a tracking device linked to an app on your phone, meaning you can trace your umbrella no matter where you leave it. The app also has an in-built weather forecast and will let you know if you’re likely to need your umbrella that day. There’s a classic black edition, and eye-catching designs with striking, pleated frills that sit atop. They come in pink, black and marshmallow with violet.

[getkisha.com](http://getkisha.com)

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**Shopping & Style**

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Kvarner getaways

With excellent roads and transport provision, Rijeka is the perfect base for exploring the many attractions of the surrounding region of Kvarner. The following ten suggestions are all viable as day trips or overnight stays.

**Rijeka is the main city** of Kvarner, a region spanning the deep bay of the same name at the northern tip of the Adriatic. Providing a natural barrier between the Italianate peninsula of Istria and the continental mass of northern Croatia, of patchwork Habsburg heritage, Kvarner offers Habsburg-era look. This sophisticated seaside resort, Opatija was Arguably Croatia’s first seaside resort. Opatija was attracting royalty and the well-to-do more than a century ago. They stayed in grand villas and sought to invigorate their health by strolling the Lungomare, a stunning seaside walkway that offers some of Croatia’s best vistas.

1. **Opatija**

Arguably Croatia’s first seaside resort, Opatija was attracting royalty and the well-to-do more than a century ago. They stayed in grand villas and sought to invigorate their health by strolling the Lungomare, a stunning seaside walkway that offers some of Croatia’s best vistas.

The vistas, villas and Lungomare remain, as does the many imposing fin-de-siècle hotels that enhance Opatija’s distinctive Habsburg-era look. This sophisticated destination also boasts a competitive restaurant scene that’s made it an important gastronomic hub in Croatia — and a great place to eat out. Hotels not only oversee many of these restaurants but also offer top-notch spa facilities too. Opatija is fancier and pricier than many other Croatian resorts, but if you want a luxurious holiday you can find it here.

In the late 19th century, when the Austria-Hungarian Empire reached its apex, the Habsburgs made this town of dizzying vistas and rocky beaches one of the hottest spots in Europe. Opatija was the place where royalty took their holidays and Isadora Duncan took her lovers. Wealthy socialites built Seces- sionist and Neo-Classical mansions on the rocks above the sea, or stayed in hotels of imperial elegance. Unlike most Croatian resorts, where a tourism infrastructure was added on to an existing settlement, Opatija was purpose-built for tourists — rich ones.

Before 1844, Opatija was nothing but a fishing village with 36 houses and a church. Higinio von Scarpa then built opulent Villa Angiolina, named after his wife, and surrounded it with a menagerie, an exotic garden and influential guests. The villa, featuring trompe l’oeil frescoes, now houses the Croatian Museum of Tourism.

The property was bought in the 1880s by the chief of the regional railway board. Soon Opatija was being successfully promoted as an overland getaway destination for a certain class of European, catered for by opulent hotels being built at the same time. An accent on health tourism — spa baths and seaside vigorous walks — kept this dream resort busy year-round. Mahler, Puccini and Chekhov were among the visitors. This legacy lingers in the stunning architecture, Viennese-style coffeehouses and Central European atmosphere, kept alive by the large number of Austrian tourists.

Meanwhile, there is a local young contingent, coming in from Rijeka and elsewhere along the coast. Keep the late-night bars busy. And the modern-day counterparts of the fin-de-siècle establishments are the spa and boutique hotels that are opening along the riviera, attracting trend-conscious clientele. Adventurous chefs have made accent on health tourism — spa baths and seaside vigorous walks — kept this dream resort busy year-round. Mahler, Puccini and Chekhov were among the visitors. This legacy lingers in the stunning architecture, Viennese-style coffeehouses and Central European atmosphere, kept alive by the large number of Austrian tourists.

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2. **Lovran**

Arranged along the foot of sheltering Mount Učka, and set on a rise above the sea that provides astonishingly beautiful views, Lovran is an ancient settlement with a centuries-old town centre and Habsburg-era villas dotted along a lush, green seaside promenade. The town is smaller and feels more exclusive than Opatija, its neighbour about five kilometres away. Despite this, there’s still plenty of life here, taking it easy on the pebbly beaches or getting busy in the jumping bars, which get packed with a generally younger crowd.

And, as with other towns along the Lungomare promenade, Lovran’s collection of superb restaurants is sufficient reason to visit. Lovran, with a population of 5,000, wasn’t always the small fry in Kvarner. A busy settlement since at least the seventh century, ‘Lau- riana’ was named after its many laurel trees. In the 12th century, the Arab writer and geographer Al-Idrisi said: ‘Lovran is a large and
progressive city, which has ships always ready, and shipbuilders always employed. Along with shipbuilding, Lovran traded locally grown cherries, peaches and their well known sweet chestnuts, called maracca, celebrated with their own festival in October. Lovran was ruled by the counts of Ljutica until the 15th cen-
tury, when Austrians took over. It remained under Austrian rule aside the Harzburg until the end of World War I.

Modern tourism came here in the late 1800s, as the wooden sailing ships that had employed Lovran’s builders were being replaced by steam vessels built elsewhere.

Following the lead of Opatija, which was becoming known as a destination for holidaymakers seeking a healthy climate, Lovran shifted its economy toward tourism. Many luxury villas were built up around its well equipped hotel accommodation, offering a choice of gastronomy.

Today, many villas have been restored into superior forms of hotel accommodation, offering relative seclusion by the sea, with four-star extras. Even if you won’t check-in, it’s worth checking out the great view from the terraces of these old main-

5 Učka Nature Park

Encompassing Mount Učka and the Citria range, Učka Nature Park (www.up-ucka.hr) stretches over 160 square kilometres. Its lowland eastern edge running parallel to the Adriatic close to Opatija and Lovran, with the other half in Ičići, Učka offers onerous sports as well as hiking and climbing. Paragliding and hang-
gliding are also attractions here, with national and international competitions held, participants taking off from ramps at Vojak and Rijegd. There are eight recommended routes for mountain bikers while climbers can choose from 62 routes in the canyon of Vela Draga. Alternatively, you can explore one of the picturesque villages dotting the landscape within the borders of the nature park. The wine-producing and sheep-

6 Platak

Sit alongside Risnjak National Park, Platak is all about outdoor activity. The focus for that outdoor activity is winter, when this ski centre comes into its own. For the 2017-18 season, Platak even opened before the main one at Soline, outside Zagreb, used for the World Cup.

Here, seven ski runs serve visitors turning on spectacular views during the day, with night-time skiing also available. Non-skiers can even hire sledges. In summer, Platak is ideal for family based excursions, surrounded by nature, perhaps with the children walking in the woods. The cablecar, otherwise busy in winter, also runs on summer weekends and bank holidays, four times a day, for panoramic rides and perfect views of the Kvarner Bay and surrounding mountain tops of Risnjak.

7 Risnjak National Park

The most northerly and arguably least known of Croatia’s national parks, Risnjak (www. risnjak.hr) is a popular destination for divers and surfers. You’re in the heart of unspoiled Gorička kotar, an unspoiled region of wooded slopes bufferling up to the border with Slovenia, somewhat ambitiously referred to as the Croatian Switzerland.

Nevertheless, it is undeniably beautiful and, as its name suggests, it’s a haven for rare wildlife. There’s lynx (in Croatian, wildcat, eagles, chamois, brown bears and even wild cats.

Most visitors come here to hike or climb. From the picturesque village of Cmi Luč, where you are at the main office and entrance to the park, a signposted educational trail runs through the forest for 4.5km. Regular instruction boards detail the fauna and flora to look out for – higher up you find Alpine snowbel, edelweiss and Alpine leopard’s-bane. From Cmi Luč, those with stronger calves and proper hiking boots can take a more challenging route up to Veliki Risnjak, the highest point in Croatian mountains, named after 19th-century botanist and explorer who first detailed much of the nature and landscape here.

Back down below, from the village of Kaštel in Rijeka, many also set out to explore the source of the river Kupa that is one of the longest and deepest springs in Croatia. Other natural attractions include Vujiči prižan, a canyon 400 metres long wedged between two- stepped rock sides, lined with bridges and stairs for easy exploration. Close by, the dramatic waterfalls of Želene vr (once provided Gorička kotar with its power supply. Accommodation in Cmi Luč mainly consists of private lodgings, completed by the somewhat upscale chalets of Runolist (www. runolist-crinkovac.com), the sauna, outdoor jacuzzi and all. A better option might be to stay in Delnice, where the Hotel Runistik (www.hotel- runistik.hr) is a comfortable three-

8 Crikvenica

A resort town a short ride south of Rijeka, Crikvenica has been attracting visitors since the Habsburg days. An easy walk from the centre, it’s beaches still flourishes today. Here, surrounded in family-friendly hotels indigenous to Crikvenica, the leading medieval Frankopan dynasty, responsible for a number of cultural attractions that now dot the landscape of the modern coastal resort of Novi Vinodolski.

Centrepiecing the riviera of the same name, a short drive south of Rijeka is its eponymous town. Named after the Vinodol Code, the oldest legal document in the Croatian language, that recognised Franko-

9 Novi Vinodolski

The Roman settlement of Vallis Vinea, the historic valley of Vinodol was ruled by the leading medieval Frankopan dynasty, responsible for a number of cultural attractions that now dot the landscape of the modern coastal resort of Novi Vinodolski.

Centrepiecing the riviera of the same name, a short drive south of Rijeka is its eponymous town. Named after the Vinodol Code, the oldest legal document in the Croatian language, that recognised Franko-

On quieter days, the nearby coastal villages of Jadranovo, Dramali and Selce provide easy access to the local centre, as is the nearby island of Krk (and therefore Rijeka airport) by a speedboat service in summer. Among the number of Blue Flag beaches in and around Crikvenica, Dramali’s caters to naturist visitors.

Alternatively, a leisurely stroll awaits along the eight kilometre promenade that stretches from Cape Kukuriku in Dramali to the Bay of Slano in Selce, past sandy beaches, naturally pebbled coasts and lush Mediterranean vegetation.

On the way, you’ll be following in the footsteps of the Habsburg Archduke Joseph and the cream of pre-war Zagreb society, who took in the air and the fine views back in the day.
Krk's tradition of tourism goes back as far as almost anywhere on the coast - they were issuing picture postcards here in 1866. Rijeka airport is located on the island's northern tip. The nearest town, Omišalj, provides a typical introduction to Krk island, a cliff-top community dating back to Roman times, though the main tourist attraction is a short hop across on the east coast. Near the village of Rudine, the cave of Biserujka features spooky stalactites and stalagmites in the so-called Great Hall, 13 metres below the point of entry. Sometimes concerts are even given here. As most visits are quite short, a 30-minute educational trail has been created, linking Biserujka to nearby Silvanjska Cave, taking in windswept sea views along the way. Further down the eastern seaboard, Vrbnik is a medieval tangle of a town set atop a limestone outcrop dramatically half-surrounded by the Adriatic way below. Those who love obscure European history can spend a while amid the Glagolitic manuscripts kept in the Parish Church, living examples of a dead Slavic language. Others might want to dander over to idyllic Konca beach. But most will want to sample Žlahtina, the straw-coloured dry white cultivated here, best enjoyed at Gospoja Vinotel (gospoja.hr), whose spectacular panoramic setting creates the perfect backdrop for the divine lamb and fresh mussels on offer.

10 Krk

As you cross the high-altitude bridge connecting the Rijeka motorway to Krk island, the sea looks huge, but the tall rocky cliffs that swallow the road ahead are even more imposing. By the time you reach Croatia’s longest and most populous island, the mainland feels miles away. A widely varied group of attractive resort towns awaits. Heavily touristed Krk town has bustling bars, and fancy gift shops, arranged in and around ancient buildings.

Novi Vinodolski. In total, three of the nine Frankopan castles that remain in their former princedom are to be found in relatively small area around the Vinodol valley: Brbinj, Grintane, and Drivenik. The latter is the best preserved, commanding a superb hill-town view of lake Tribalj below.

But Novi Vinodolski isn’t about history alone. Europe’s biggest spa centre and newly built five-star hotel, with luxury apartments overlooking the Kvarner Bay, its own stretch of beach and hub of heated swimming pools, comprise the Novi Spa Hotels & Resort (www.novi.hr), one of the finest facilities on the Croatian coast.

If you’re staying elsewhere, perhaps at the four-star Hotel Tamaris (www.hoteltamaris.com), then the sea-facing Restoran Vinodol (www.restaurant-vinodol.hr) has more than three decades of experience in providing quality fish and seafood.

Summer in the City

This dizzying diverse programme of events celebrates the lead up to Rijeka 2020 European Capital of Culture. Running from mid-June until mid-September it encompasses all the summer months and is an essential programme for visitors to reference. Featuring music concerts, a children’s festival, art interventions, exhibitions, gastronomic events, plays, performances, DJ events, workshops and film screenings, there really is something for everyone here.

The season takes place throughout the city, including around some key ancient Rijeka buildings such as Trsat Castle, the industrial waterfront and its surrounding buildings, plus sections of the city centre. In choosing to attend any of the dates, you’re therefore ensured a cultural experience that takes place within some of the city’s unique backdrops.

Croatian National Theatre: Ivan pl. Zajc Falstaff opera Falstaff is the last opera gifted to the world by Giuseppe Verdi, a masterpiece much loved and performed worldwide over 125 years since it was written. A comic opera in three acts, it is based on the writings of William Shakespeare, one of three Verdi operas so influenced. Rijeka Opera have presented all three of Verdi’s Shakespeare operas within the last month. With Gonzalo Surfaro as Falstaff, Amantia Knego / Ingrid Haljer as Alice Ford, Vanja Željković as Nanetta, Biljana Kovac as Mistress Quickly; Ivana Žrbljan as Meg Page; Robert Kolar as Ford, Aija Farasin as Fenton, Sergej Kiselev as Dr. Gruca, Marko Fortunato as Raddershe, Dario Berich as Pistol and with Ville Marevjoff conducting, it promises to be a fitting end to the Verdi season. — Winter Palace, Zajc Theatre (hnk-zajc.hr/en). Jul 14.

Sailor Sweet & Salt Festival

The loss of the much loved Hartera venue and its festival, held in a former industrial complex closed due to safety concerns, is still felt in Rijeka. However, co-curator of
that festival. Damir Martinović of Rijeka band Let 3, returns as co-curator, alongside Ivanka Mazurkijević of this all new music festival. The first night is held in Ex Port Delta and sees former Haustor frontman Darko Rundek visit with his latest project, the youthful Darko Rundek & Ekipa ensemble. An extended line up will play world music-influenced songs from throughout Rundek’s long and illustrious career. Local heroes Urban & 4, singer-songwriter Sara Renar, and the Mrle-Mazurkijević project Mr Lee & Ivane Sky are among the musicians playing earlier in the night.

The following evening, the action moves to Torpedo for a sample of more club-oriented electronic sounds. The two-roomed event boasts techno and slightly less frantic sounds with Rijeka DJ Marina Karamarko and others in room one and Life4Funk and more in room two.

Chelsea Wolfe and Brutus
California singer and songwriter Chelsea Wolfe and her band visit as part of their largely sold out European tour. Combining folk music, heavy metal, electronic and gothic music styles, she has released five critically acclaimed albums and had her music featured in major TV series such as Game of Thrones, Fear The Walking Dead and How To Get Away With Murder. Support comes from female-fronted Belgian trio Brutus who combine hardcore, rock and metal elements. The concert is part of the Furioza Cycle schedule, a series of concerts exclusively performing music by female artists.

Port Etno music and gastronomy festival
A festival celebrating diversity using music and food as its core themes. The event holds a particular emphasis on ethnic minorities living within Rijeka and the surrounding regions. Last year the event boasted a stunning performance by the Karandila Gypsy Brass Orchestra and this year there will also be musical performance closing each of the evenings. Aimed at a multicultural audience of all ages, this is very much a family friendly event highlighting food and culture perhaps not always immediately visible to those visiting Rijeka.

Southwest sounds

You couldn’t get any further from the Arizona dustbowl than the rainy seaport city of Rijeka. But that’s where Tucson-based Calexico find themselves this July for the Summer in the City.

BLENDING INDIE ROCK with flourishes of mariachi, country, jazz and Americana, Calexico (as its name implies) makes music that draws on an entire continent of influences. While the subject matter can be tragic at times, the group lends a grand, cinematic scope to its heartbroken melodies. On the phone from Arizona, Calexico frontman Joey Burns explains how the band’s stay in vibrant Coyoacán, Frida Kahlo’s bohemian neighbourhood in Mexico City, had a beguiling influence on their latest album.

Mexico is a place often visited by musicians, geographically and metaphorically — but rarely its capital. What drew you to Mexico City?

I wanted to go somewhere that had a blend of urban and rustic charm. Mexico City has long been a place I’ve read and dreamed about. There is much there to inspire songwriting and music. We had a great time living and working in Coyoacán. It was a big inspiration, getting to walk these vibrant streets full of life and colour...

Visiting Frida’s Casa Azul was also inspiring, to see how much pain she endured and still managed to make the most evocative images in history. We also met the contemporary artist Pedro Reyes and see his art installation called ‘Disarm’ which is a collection of music instruments built from broken pieces of weapons seized from the drug cartels. The sounds were out of this world and we got to try playing a few of them as well.

How do those collaborations translate to the stage?

We have toured with a seven-piece band including members from Spain (Jairo Zavala), Mexico (Sergio Mendoza) and Guatemala (Gaby Moreno) so the mix of instruments and voices helps replicate the songs well plus gives us a lot of Latin influence on those songs written in Spanish. These members were on the album and have been touring all last year. We love playing in Croatia and can’t wait to explore more of the country and see what makes the people so special.

After twenty years of being in the band, what’s the secret of working together without wanting to kill each other?

You have to take your time, and be thankful for all the good, the bad and the ugly. Practice being Zen in the chaotic moments and smile, don’t forget to smile. Enjoy the meals together and thank everyone along the way, every technician and musician, audience too.

Bullets and rocks is a song about immigration, how important is diversity in America?

Very important. The whole nation is built of immigrants. It is our story and the world’s as well. Look at Donald Trump. He is the extreme side of fear and ignorance. He is not helping in the least bit. He feeds off drama and desperate acts.

Tell us about your collaborators?

There’s so much to say. The guest musicians and singers was an afterthought once we had recorded and arranged all the songs. It was a nice surprise to have so many friends and artists we’ve admired be apart of this album. It sets this album apart from the works in the past in that there are so many guests.

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ONE OF THE LONGEST-AWAITED events of autumn 2017 was the opening of Rijeka’s Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (MMSU) in the Benčić Complex, a ruggedly handsome cluster of post-industrial buildings just over the road from the main railway station. The revitalization of these greying sentinels of Rijeka’s historical memory is one of the key planks of Rijeka’s ongoing transformation, providing a cultural hub which will long outlast the city’s stint as a European Capital of Culture in 2020.

Beginning as a sugar refinery before being enlarged to serve as a tobacco factory, the complex became a motor parts plant after World War II, when it was renamed Rikard Benčić after a local partisan hero shot by fascist police. The complex consists of three main parts, an administrative building that is earmarked for the Rijeka City Museum, the so-called T-building, which will house the Municipal Library and the so-called Children’s House, harbouring spaces for workshops, creative play and a cinema; and the H-building, which is the bit into which the MMSU has just moved. The library part of the project is likely to be
finished before 2021, the whole undertaking
a highly symbolic keynote of the city’s long-
term cultural strategy—a handy reminder that
Rijeka’s stint as a European Capital of Culture is
intended to be the beginning of something big,
rather than simply the culmination.

It’s the Benčić’s administrative building that
is the star of the show. Built in 1786 and known
as the Palača Šećerane (which might be rather
creatively translated as “Sugar Palace”), it really
is quite a masterpiece, boasting Baroque and
Neo-classical details on its facade, and delicate
stucco-work and frescoes on the interior. The
restorers are already hard at work on a building
that will be the pride of the city when it is finally
completed and the museum displays move in.
Some time late in 2019 is the optimistic forecast
for the opening.

Until that day comes, it’s up to the MMSU
to take on the role of cultural flagship. It has
been in existence ever since 1948, for years
been housed in what was always considered
temporary accommodation on the second floor
of Rijeka University Library. For the time being,
the MMSU occupies only one floor of its new
home (there is more exhibition space to come),
and will be mounting a series of temporary
exhibitions rather than organizing a permanent
display. Items from the museum’s extensive
permanent collection may well be featuring
in some of the themed exhibitions scheduled
for the next few years, however; and there will
also be individual and group shows involving
leading contemporary artists from abroad.

The architect responsible for adapting the
former factory floor, Dinko Peračić, opted for a
minimalistic, functional approach, retaining
the spindly iron pillars and rough grey floors
without fetishizing the post-industrial look. The
background aroma of the factory, its distant per-
fume of motor oil, has not entirely gone away.

Before the Benčić operation got underway
there was serious talk of constructing brand-
new buildings for the MMSU and the city
museum, or maybe tacking modern annexes
onto the existing Benčić structures to create a
glimmer contemporary space. If the new MMSU
is anything to go by, the decision to leave the
grimy old Benčić buildings much as they
are has turned out to be a stroke of good sense,
bringing out the emotion of an old building
rather than paying for the prestige of the trophy-
tower. Not so much the Bilbao Effect, then, as
the Rijeka Effect.
Visit KVARNER - Croatia’s best kept secret

Diversity is beautiful
Tito’s iconic yacht is to be salvaged from rust and converted into a new museum. Justin McDonnell looks at the controversial flight of The Seagull.

Fenced off and left to rust on Rijeka’s central marina, the Seagull was once the presidential yacht of Marshal Josip Broz Tito. A floating home from home, Tito used the boat for glamorous parties and official state visits.

Born in 1892 to a Croat father and Slovene mother, Tito ruled Yugoslavia from the end of WWI until his death in 1980. To suggest his legacy is divisive would be a whopping understatement: some consider Tito a hero who won the partisan war against the Nazis; others remember him as a murderous dictator.

The albatross better symbolises Croatia’s complex relationship with this decaying ship. Built in 1938 in Genoa, The Seagull was originally designed to ship fruit between Africa and Italy. Appropriated by the Italians during the war, it was attacked by the British in 1941 and sunk by Allied forces in 1944. Retrieved from the Adriatic seabed, it was later repurposed as the grand presidential yacht of Josip Tito.

The 385ft-long ship ferried Tito around the Adriatic and beyond, and played host to statesmen, tycoons and the rich and famous. Conjuring fantasy dinner-party levels of stardom, the boat courted Tito’s celebrity friends Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton and political figures as diverse as Gandhi and Gaddafi.

Unlike his former communist comrades in the Eastern Bloc, Tito imagined his Yugoslavia as an outward-facing socialist republic, one that prized itself on its openness to the world. The ship was a majestic sign of wealth and an extension of his regime. At home, the yacht was lionised in state media as a symbol of Yugoslavia’s respectable standing on the international stage. It garnered international attention when the yacht steered Tito to the River Thames to meet Winston Churchill. A historical milestone, the event marked the first visit to the United Kingdom by a communist head of state.

After Tito’s death, Yugoslavia disintegrated and collapsed into a bloody civil war that cost over 100,000 lives. Over time, Croatia took a more jaundiced view of The Seagull. The boat was very nearly relegated to maritime history. Taken over by the Montenegrins and sold to a Greek yachtsman, The Seagull reared its beak in Croatia once more when he sent the ship to Rijeka for repairs. He couldn’t afford the bills, and the boat was claimed by the local authorities.

The battered ship lay dormant on the banks of Rijeka, occasionally used for impromptu parties and the odd exhibition, but struggled to find real purpose. A few years ago, the mayor of Rijeka revealed his plans to salvage The Seagull. During an intense political atmosphere, when a conservative government set about stripping streets, squares and parks of Tito’s name, this chafed against popular opinion.

But Rijeka saw promise in this rotting hull. The mayor unfurled his vision of the new museum, expected to be a sensitive, honest depiction of Tito’s legacy, free from idolatry or resentment. The museum will preserve the original features of Tito’s floating living quarters, from the hairpin-legged tables to his pink mattress and veneered-teak panelling that was the apex of chic in the ’50s.

As the city scrubs up for the Rijeka 2020 European Capital of Culture, 4.5 million has been secured for restoration of the boat, which will also feature a capacious bar and restaurant. Headed by Nikolina Jelavić Mitrović, one of the architects responsible for the beautiful Apyromenos Museum, the project has finally reached the critical mass it needs to sail on ahead. Whatever you might think of Tito, the historical flight of The Seagull is far from over yet.
Marc Rowlands assesses the return of a much-loved local monument.

Regardless of how solidly constructed they are, monuments and statues live a precarious existence. They can incite pride or fear, stirring to the extremes the emotions of those who live within their view. And their destruction can equally cause polarized reactions.

In recent memory, who could forget the triumphant cheers that accompanied the toppling of the 12 metre high statue of Saddam Hussein in Firdos Square, Baghdad at the end of the battle for the city in 2003? And, consider the global outrage sparked by the cultural cleansing undertaken by Islamic State extremists throughout Syria and Iraq, particularly the losses at the World Heritage site of Palmyra. Croatia itself has seen the destruction, removal and reinstatement of many statues and monuments as governing regimes have changed. One of Croatia’s most famous statues, that of ban Josip Jelačić on horseback was removed from Zagreb’s main square in 1946 when Communists assumed control. The statue has since returned, although these days the sword wielding Jelačić faces south, perhaps signifying the now friendly relations between Croatia and Hungary. Jaw-droppingly beautiful Communist era spomenici (monuments), constructed as memorials to Partisan fighters and those who died at the hands of fascists, are a rich part of postmodern art heritage all over the former Yugoslavia. Yet in Croatia, some of them have fared better than others.

The stunning Monument to the Revolution of the people of Moslavina in Podgarić, Berek and the incredible flower at Jasenovac, designed by architect, university lecturer and one time mayor of Belgrade, Bogdan Bogdanović, still stand. But in 1992, the gargantuan Monument to the revolutionary victory of the people of Ilavovia in Kamenška, Brestovac was destroyed, perhaps shortsightedly, by sections of the army in revisionist rejection of the country’s Communist past.

One of Rijeka’s most famous and enduring monuments, the statue of the eagle that sat above the City Tower for several hundred years, lead a not untroubled life. On June 6 1659 and at the request of the people of Rijeka, Emperor Leopold I issued a charter with which he approved a coat of arms for the city. Central to the design was a two headed eagle which since has become a symbol of the city, much loved by its inhabitants. The first eagle sculpture atop the City Tower was probably installed in 1754 but this tin sculpture was removed in 1890. This was during a time of conflict between city authorities and those in the then governing Hungary as to whether a city flag or Hungarian flag should fly above the city clock. Needless to say, locals were distressed at the loss of their eagle and a second sculpture was installed on July 1 1906 to huge local celebration. This new two headed eagle was 200cm tall with a wingspan of 300 cm, and together with its plinth weighed some 2000kg.

The eagle survived in this form until the arrival of Italian nationalist and proto fascist, Gabriele D’Annunzio, who in 1919 sought Rijeka’s independence. Believing the two headed eagle to be an emblem of Austria, one of its heads was brutally cut off. It remained in this condition until 1949 when Communists, who viewed it as a bourgeois and anti-socialist symbol, removed it altogether. Rijeka’s City Tower has been bereft of the beloved statue ever since. But in 2009, investigations began into the possible restoration of the two headed eagle. The project has not been without its challenges.

Firstly, it was necessary to assess if the aged City Tower could still take the burden of a reinstalled statue. Secondly, no remains of either of the previous sculptures existed. However, archival sources and photographs were found and based on these, the Academy of Applied Arts created a small scale model of the 1906 sculpture which was used to create the full size version. The two headed eagle of Rijeka stands in contrast to many other removed or destroyed statues and monuments in that the local population have always held it dear. To the people of Rijeka, it was never an imposition, but a source of pride and identity. A unique symbol for a unique city, its reinstatement has not come too soon for those who live beneath its wings.
Sweet and Salt

A new project embraces and reinvents Rijeka’s industrial landscape, as Marc Rowlands finds out.

“RIJEKA IS NOT YOUR TYPICAL, beautiful Croatian seaside town. And nor did it position itself to be when applying for Capital Of Culture status,” says a local colleague, in preface to explaining the city’s Sweet and Salt Project, an engagement with the city’s industrial brownsfield sites. “Rijeka is a dirty town.”

Her words may sound a little unfair and also difficult to believe if you’re walking around Rijeka’s pristine and charming city centre. But her brutal, honest assessment is very typical of someone from Rijeka. The people of the city do not shy away from their industrial heritage, for it is inescapable. Instead, they embrace it.

In 2000, Rijeka’s leading alternative rock band Let 3 were preparing to release their fourth album proper ‘Jedina’. They announced that only one single copy of the album would be available to buy. This was at least an improvement on their last album release, 1997’s ‘Nečuveno’, which contained no music or sound whatsoever.

In order to promote the new album, they drove to the capital Zagreb and had themselves mock executed by shotgun on the city’s main square, Trg bana Josipa Jelačića. Their five executioners, dressed entirely in black, wearing dresses and head shawls, could have looked like grandmothers in mourning, save for the fact that each wore large Dr Martens or cowboy boots and large, thick, dark moustaches. Let 3’s barefoot and hand tied corpses lay lifeless on the square, in front of hundreds of gleeful fans and Croatian media photographers, their white shirts splattered with fake blood. Let 3 are the Croatian rock scene’s arch pranksters and provocateurs.

Luckily, Let 3 weren’t at all dead and when ‘Jedina’ was released it was accompanied by a single “Tazi Tazi” in which the band returned to life. The single’s video, shot entirely on location within Rijeka’s dockside industrial landscape, is one of the most debauched and bacchanalian you will ever see, featuring writhing, half naked bodies partying in the sunshine, high dives into the ocean from industrial buildings and the curious placement of flowers and a sheep.

Many of the videos revellers wore narodna nošnja, traditional Croatian folk costumes usually reserved for formal occasions such as folk dances or annual village days. Such attire stood in incredibly stark contrast to the containers and concrete that served as the party’s industrial backdrop.

This early contemporary example of Rijeka’s artists reclaiming their industrial landscape has since been repeated many times over. For around ten years the Hartera venue, located in an old paper factory complex, was one of the most popular locations for the city’s youth, hosting many small festivals and events, plus its flagship Hartera Festival, before the building was closed due to the bad condition of the walls.

It is this exact location, where Rijeka’s fresh water river flows into the salt waters of the Adriatic, that inspires the name of the Sweet and Salt project.

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In more recent times, Torpedo Festival has been located in one of the city’s old torpedo factories (the torpedo having been invented in the city and first widely exported from there). Many concerts and festivals, including some of the biggest names on the European techno music scene, have also appeared in KBC Warehouse and Exportdrvo, an old port warehouse close to where the Rječina river flows into the sea.

It is this exact location, where Rijeka’s fresh water rivers flow into the salt waters of the Adriatic, that inspires the name of the Sweet and Salt project. Its artistic interventions aim to engage citizens with their industrial and urban environments.

Rijeka was once driven by its industry, but recent decades have seen its importance to the city decline rapidly. Many former sites now lie abandoned and closed. After opening part of the former port area to the public – the two kilometer long Rijeka breakwater, Molo Longo – the situation changed. Pedestrian areas merged with abandoned industrial zones and a huge part of Rijeka’s potential became unlocked.

Designed by Croatian architect Idis Turato, the Sweet and Salt project’s target area stretches along the Rječina canyon, over the Delta and all the way to Molo Longo. Some forgotten spaces have been re-activated, while the others are under construction for new purposes such as cultural institutions, galleries and pop-up events such as installations, cinema, theatre, dance and music events. The ambitious scheme aims to utilise a variety of distinct, locally recognised landmarks including some of the aforementioned venues, a lighthouse, the old train line which serviced the port, a barge, waterside cranes and the Galeb (Yugoslavian leader Tito’s official yacht, now permanently moored in Rijeka and which turns 80 years old this year).

In life, you can only play the cards you’re dealt. The people of Rijeka do not pine for the beautiful beachside locations visible in other Croatian cities. And why should they? Some of the best, little known beaches in Croatia are within an hour’s drive of their city in Primorje-Gorski Kotar County. Neither do the people of Rijeka pine for the plain, sun blasted walls and green wooden sun shutters typically seen not only in other Croatian seaside locations but all around the Mediterranean. For places in Primorje-Gorski Kotar County like Rijeka and Opatija are gloriously unique amongst Croatia’s coastal cities, boasting the rich, grandiose Austro-Hungarian architecture usually only seen in the continental part of the country.

Rijeka’s industrial landscape is just one facet of the city. But being such a major one, it simply must be engaged with by its current and future populations. Via projects like Sweet and Salt, Rijeka will be able to reclaim and reinvent these once ghostly and scarred tracts of land. In doing so, important questions about urban planning, renewal and the environment will be raised. It will also claim this industrial heritage as an integral part of the identity of the city and its inhabitants.
Tobogan festival

Bringing much-needed pizzazz to the summer holidays, this festival gets kids out of the house

SOMETIMES it can be difficult to drag children away from their phones, computers and virtual existences. Rijeka’s Tobogan aims to engage children with a multi-faceted programme that will see them interact with each other, arts and activities, thus drawing them away from the regular boredom of the city’s concrete.

In 2018, at the opening of the programme, thousands of locals and tourists descended on the central promenade of Korzo for the Tobogan parade; a creepy cavalcade of huge spiders, praying mantis, giant ants and Venus flytraps, over 9 metres high. Parading through streets well known to local children, this inventive display made such routes seem unfamiliar, stretching the imagination and adding more than a sense of excitement to the everyday normal.

Fire breathers and jugglers took part in the circus theatre that officially opened the event. There were morning, afternoon and early evening films shown at Rijeka’s Art Cinema and outdoors in parks Mlaka and Nikola Host. To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the first Harry Potter book, an exhibition paid tribute to 20 different versions published internationally. Rijeka City Puppet Theatre drew audiences into such diverse spaces as the botanical garden section of the city’s Natural History museum and Rijeka’s Astronomical Centre. Street performers and Capoeira dancers and ballet dancers joined recreation and activity days that took place in the city’s parks and green areas.

Next year the programme will hold a similarly vibrant array of events and activities for children and their families.
DARKO RUNDEK is a name known in most households in Croatia. It’s perhaps a little surprising that should be the case, as he’s never really made music that you would class as either mainstream or pop. He has instead followed the path of a curious, restless and innovative musician, willingly travelling along in whichever direction the muse should call him. Nevertheless, he is widely loved across Croatia and its diaspora, and acknowledged as one of the country’s most interesting artists.

With July’s midday sun hitting the ground outside a building on island Brač, Darko Rundek steps away from the sounds of those accompanying him in order to speak. At first glance, Darko Rundek perhaps looks every day of his 62 years, a shock of grey white hair atop his head and lines on his face that imply a full life having been lived. He is quite handsome, with high cheek bones prominent on an otherwise slightly sunken face. But when he begins to speak, Darko Rundek at least some of the year, Darko Rundek has returned home. Whether the cause or the result of his return, his latest musical project, Darko Rundek & Ekipa, is something he talks about with great enthusiasm (as he does with much of his subject matter, which ranges from discussing climate change, wider environmental concerns and even how such things affect the fishing on Brač).

“I really like it very much,” he says of the young musicians he now performs alongside who make up his Ekipa. “They are mainly from Zagreb, apart from Isabel, who is French, she lives in Pula, and Duco is living in Sarajevo.”

“In terms of instruments, it is similar to Cargo Orkestar,” he says, referencing the extended ensemble he put together after the turn of the millennium, that band having served as an alternate creative outlet to his then hugely successful solo career. “But because the people in the band are from a younger generation, they have a different energy. A younger energy. And with some of the influences they have gathered... it’s something that I’ve missed lately. They are really very creative.”

Darko Rundek & Ekipa were originally formed for the Apocalypso Now tour, revisiting of material from Darko Rundek’s breakthrough debut solo album, 1996’s ‘Apokalipso.’ An adventurous affair containing a vast array of instruments and musical styles, ‘Apokalipso’ was the Croatian musical event of 1996 and 1997. It went on to win multiple awards and barely a day goes by when you cannot still hear one of its songs, particularly the title track, on

Post-Apocalypso

Darko Rundek has been at the cutting edge of rock and roll for more than 20 years. Marc Rowlands interviews Croatia’s icon of alternativeness before his show at Rijeka’s Sweet and Salt festival.

DARKO RUNDEK

Because the people in the band are from a younger generation, they have a different energy.
some Croatian radio station. The album was far ahead of its time, particularly in terms of creat-
ing a new Croatian musical expression which engaged with, rather than wiltfully ignored, a
Yugoslavian heritage. Rundek’s holistic view of
music contained therein was a potential blue-
print that, over twenty years later, very few from
Croatia have managed to follow.

“It’s probably because Croatia is no
longer part of Yugoslavia,” he says, perhaps
grandly, of the noticeable absence of Pan-
Yugoslavian sounds in much of today’s Croatian
music. “There’s less of a presence of the other
styles of Balkan music here than there was
before. Not only that, I think with Croatian
independence, the country is looking for its own
cultural identity. And it is looking more towards
independence, the country is looking for its own
styles of Balkan music here than there was
longer part of Yugoslavia,” he says, perhaps

looking even further back, he says, “I travelled all over Yugoslavia,” he explains,
when asked from where he picked up a love
for such a broad palette of music. “And in
Yugoslavia, I think all of those influences already
existed...”

“It was very, very diverse,” he says, stressing
the point as though still amazed. “In Bosnia
there is the influence of Turkish music, in
Macedonian music there are Oriental rhythms,
in the north of Croatia there is Panonan
music, which has Hungarian influences, we
had Slovenian and even German folk music
influences. In Serbia we have some strange folk
music. On the radio when I was a kid there
were festivals which were so varied, some of it
sounded like alien pop music. There were so
many different styles surrounding me.”

Drawing from a rich back catalogue, with
wide influences and the freshness of the musi-
cally ambitious new players now surrounding
him, there’s probably never been a better time
culturally ambitious new players now surrounding
him, there’s probably never been a better time
to catch Darko Rundek & Ekipa in concert.

Their latest release is a song called ‘Pješčane
gate of the miraculous.”

From Zagreb, we would go there on our summer
crossing of many roads. “It’s a very good place
to hold it, because it’s on the cultural crossroad
to Rijeka as a part of the Sailor Sweet and Sour
Festival, an event which has been co-curated by
Damar Martinovic of Rijeka band Let 3.

“Respect them more and more, I must say,”
says Rundek in earnest when asked about the
influence of such a broad palette of music. “And in
Yugoslavia, I think all of those influences already
existed...”

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influence of such a broad palette of music. “And in
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existed...”
Jonathan
Like Let 3, Jonathan’s roots lie in their hometown’s punk-rock legacy – although you’re much less likely to find them cavorting naked on stage.
This cool five-piece have been hovering around indie stardom since they released their debut single Maggie in 2013. Dark and angst-ridden but upbeat, the song gave a promising taste of what was to be their first album: Bliss.
The 2014 record solidified their moody sound and mustachioed, neo-romantic aesthetic, and reviews were abuzz with comparisons to Indie giants Interpol and Franz Ferdinand.
They’ve headlined all of Croatia’s most prominent venues, and decorated line-ups at alternative music festivals EXIT and InMusic. Probably the surest indicator of success to come, they’ve supported Indie bastions The Killers and Editors on tour.
To Love, the first half of their second album, was met with critical acclaim when it arrived last year. Part two, ‘To Hold’ is coming soon.

Tea Tulić
Rijeka’s literary scene is an exciting place to be in 2018, especially for Tea Tulić. With accolades pouring in from international literary circles, Tulić is Rijeka’s – and possibly even Croatia’s – most visible contemporary writer.
The country’s leading literary magazines, as well as some from the US, have been publishing her short stories for years, but Tulić really started turning heads when she won Zarez magazine’s Prozak Award for young writers in 2011. Hair Everywhere, her debut novel, soon followed.
A candid account of a family coping with a cancer diagnosis, the novel draws on Tulić’s own experience. Critics were impressed by the book’s beguiling mix of fiction and reality, and its striking fragmentary style. Tulić’s writing has a strong sense of rhythm, so it makes sense that her ventures don’t stop at the page – she released a spoken-word album with local music collective Japanski Premijeri in 2014.
Clearly passionate about her trade, Tulić is president of ‘Katapult’, an organisation dedicated to nurturing Rijeka’s young writing talent.

Delta 5, and SIZ
It’s telling that Rijeka’s foremost gallery, the Museum of Modern Art, is usually bare-walled. In Rijeka, painting is passe: conceptual installations and performance pieces abound, without a watercolour in sight. So far, so typical of contemporary art – but what makes Rijeka’s artists stand out is their shared commitment to community and activism. There’s a remarkably tight network of creatives here, largely thanks to a project called Delta 5. This have-minded group, who base themselves in a renovated industrial warehouse leftover from the region’s socialist era, focus on innovative use of space. One notable member is Tomislav Brajnović. His multi-media work explores themes such as the refugee crisis and state surveillance. Another prolific name is Milijana Babiić. A committed collaborator in Ljubljana’s annual City of Women festival, she creates performance pieces with a staunchly feminist bent. One of the most fiery collectives working at Delta 5 is SIZ – which takes its title from the names of socialist-era cooperatives. They recently master-minded an initiative which called for the public to get out and paint on the street; this community-driven spirit is exactly what makes Rijeka’s hotly contemporary art world so accessible to all.
Route of the Frankopans

Marc Rowlands retraces the history of ancient Croatia through the legacies of its greatest noble house, The Frankopans.

Throughout history, the borders of Croatia have expanded and retracted like a sponge, as interests such as the Ottoman Empire, the Hapsburgs and denizens bent on self determination fought persistently over the territory. At its grandest, cities such as Bihac and Bania Luka, today far beyond the borders into Bosnia and Herzegovina, were part of Croatia. But at its weakest, Croatia was reduced to only what is now the western part of the country, this retraction effectively making much of the then Croatian nobility obsolete.

Two distinct noble families remained, the Zrinski family and the Frankopans, largely due to their allegiances and the fact they held lands in these most westerly regions. As such, they
were the most enduring of all the Croatian noble houses. From the 12th century to the second half of the 17th century, across 114 family members and 17 generations, the history of the Frankopans in particular is interwoven with the development of Croatia. Through alternating allegiances with Vienna, Hungary and the Ottoman Empire, theirs is a story that incorporates the defence of Christian Europe, the ruthless political intricacies and inter-marriages of the continent’s greatest royal houses (and also their attempted overthrow, in the hopes of establishing independence).

The Frankopans have left an indelible mark on the country. Contemporarily, many famous streets are named after them and some of the oldest historical documents pertaining to Croatia, both legal and cultural, can be attributed to them. What stand amongst the finest examples of ancient Croatian architecture and fortifications were built, inhabited and manned by the Frankopans. And though they perhaps appeared to switch sides several times, one allegiance held firm; that with the Catholic church. This bond played no small part in ensuring Croatia became the strongly Catholic nation it remains today.

Primorje–Gorski Kotar County in western Croatia is prime Frankopan turf. Today its borders reach inland into the Istrian peninsula and along some of its coast, extending north significantly into the beautiful mountainous region of Gorski Kotar. It incorporates the Bay of Kvarner, islands including Krk, Rab, Lošinj and Cres, with Rijeka as its authoritative and cultural capital.

It is within this region that visitors can travel the 17 Frankopan castles and 3 sacral buildings which make up The Route Of The Frankopans. In doing so, they will see a portion of Croatia that, unlike Slavonia and the coasts of Istria and Dalmatia, never seceded. In effect, this authentic, ancient Croatia, with The Route Of The Frankopans perfectly illustrating how the country’s greatest noble house were able to maintain it as such.

There is no correct place to start the route and, indeed each of the 20 sites can be enjoyed individually, but visitors to island Krk would be well advised to check out the three located there, not least as they are the cradle of the Frankopan estate. Hidden from view and inland, Gradec castle is the birthplace of the dynasty, their original centre of military, political and administrative power from where they ruled over neighbouring islands such as Brač, Hvar, Korčula and Lastovo.

The Frankopan Castle is much more unavoidable, located
settlement, its 15th century church of St Stephen, the baroque church of St Domnius and the town's lake. The clear waters of the Adriatic are quite rightly a major pull for many visitors to Croatia, but to not see the country's interior would be missing out on some of its most spectacular geography. The third part of the trail lies with the often stunning mountainous region of Gorski Kotar, its Frankopan architecture many times framed by spectacular natural backdrops. The minor Zrinski Castle in Čabar, like many historical sites in Croatia, still plays a part in the functioning town of today and as a result is beautifully preserved. Severin Castle, with its beautiful riverside location, also manages to feel somewhat eerie, the location having been looted after the fall of house Frankopan. Stara Sušica Castle is a little off the beaten track, lying some 60 kilometres to the east of Rijeka, but it is a stunning architectural gem which has been lovingly restored many times. It nestles in the cooling shadows of tall coniferous trees just outside of the town. Comitejo is the westernmost Serbian Orthodox monastery in Europe, founded around 1600 when Orthodox settlers (thought to be from the region of Krka) were drafted in to protect the area from the Ottomans. The site also includes the charming church of Radunjeva, Saint John the Baptist, built in 1719.

2018 is the 25th anniversary of the founding of modern day Primorje-Gorski Kotar County. What’s more, it is the 900th year anniversary of the Frankopans. As a result, many special events are planned to take place at the major sites on the Frankopan route throughout the year. What better time to travel the Route of the Frankopans?

Novi Vinodolski. Between these are a trail which early rising sightseers, keen to take in everything, could easily manage by car in one day. It holds many highlights.

The Trsat Fortress, a important strategic site located on a hill just short of 155 metres tall, dominates Rijeka Bay, as does Bakar’s castle. The town looks small today in comparison to Croatia’s major cities, but even as late as the late 18th century was one of the country’s then largest. Located high on a peninsula at the very entrance of the Bay of Bakar, Neva Kraljevica’s construction was commenced by Petar Zrinski in 1651 and can rightly be claimed as one of the key sites where we can today see the intertwining of the two great Croatian houses, Zrinski and Frankopan. There are many examples of these family’s connection along the route, but this was the actual residence of Katarina Frankopan and her husband Petar Zrinski (the beautiful and well preserved site once held Croatia’s very first museum). Once abandoned and forgotten, Drvenik Castle today rises majestically atop the modern centrally in the city of Krk, just back from the waters edge and skilfully incorporated within the Roman town ramparts. Its four towers still dominate the traditional skyline, just as they must have done from the 13th century. The third is the charming Franciscan monastery on island Kolijun in Punat Bay. Hopping over to the mainland lies a rich part of the trail, boasting some six castles and several Frankopan-era old towns that run down the coast from Grobnik Castle, which looms above Rijeka, lying four kilometres to its north, right the way down to the 13th century Kvadrac tower in

Route of the Frankopans

Time Out Rijeka for Visitors
A new philanthropic business club aims to bolster Rijeka and Primorje-Gorski’s cultural scenes, hoping to have a lasting effect way beyond 2020.

WHEN PLANNING the Rijeka 2020 European Capital of Culture project, it was recognised from day one that it should be an event that brings together the whole of Rijeka and its surrounding communities, not just a cultural and artistic occasion. The programme of events occurring reflects this. But so do its contributors. The PartneRI Business Club Association was founded to allow Rijeka and Primorje-Gorski Kotar county’s business community entry to the project at an early stage. In doing so, Rijeka 2020 European Capital of Culture will have a long-lasting effect on the cultural and artistic identity of the region. It reflects this. But so do its contributors.

Business matters

Business club PartneRI

Irena Kregar Šegota has worked on the ECoC project since its beginning. A cultural manager specialising in international cooperation and fundraising, she was an Executive Coordinator in charge of international relations for the Rijeka 2020 bid and later worked as Acting CEO. Irena is now the Director for Development and Strategic Partnerships at Rijeka 2020 European Capital of Culture.

Who’s involved?

Rijeka 2020 LLC was founded by The City of Rijeka and the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County. The company’s goal is the successful outcome of Rijeka 2020 European Capital of Culture, while infrastructural investments are managed by the City of Rijeka and the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County.

Irena Kregar Šegota

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A word from the mayor

Vojko Obersnel is serving his sixth term as mayor of Rijeka. He tells us how the city’s plans are being shaped by Rijeka 2020 European Capital of Culture.

I was born in Rijeka and I’ve spent my life in the city. Rijeka means everything to me. It’s a very pleasant town to live in - not too big or too small. It can meet the needs of every individual - from the University to the city’s incredibly diverse cultural scenes. Over the last several years, the European Commission has selected transition cities for the title of European Capital of Culture. Most often, places that are chosen are changing from an industrial city to culture-oriented or technology-oriented one. We also put emphasis on the importance of diversity in our application, in a time when Europe is going through considerable changes. Our diverse nationalities, religions and worldviews: I believe these reasons made all the difference.

The Rijeka 2020 European Capital of Culture program will establish an ideal framework for the city’s cultural institutions, ranging from the Museum of the City, the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, the library... These institutions already operate in the city, but this project will give them additional support.

We will also renovate an industrial area of the city centre, a part which represents a major site of an abandoned factory. The site is important to the city’s industrial heritage, but it will now be given a new function. The city itself will benefit in terms of visibility, in both culture and tourism.
Cover story
We asked some of Croatia’s best artists and creatives to design a Rijeka-themed number for 2020. These are the stories behind their cover designs.

Stipan Tadić
One of the most visible Croatian artists of his generation, Stipan Tadić is a Zagreb-born visual artist working as a painter, illustrator, comic book and mural artist, both internationally and on Croatia’s art scene. Tadić regularly exhibits and has been awarded for his work several times, including receiving the Special Award at the Biennale of Painting in Zagreb in 2007. “I always loved Rijeka – as a city, the atmosphere and the people who live there,” he says. “I think that the selection of Rijeka as the 2020 European Capital of Culture is significant for the decentralisation of the Croatian art scene,” he adds, and as vice president and co-founder of the Association of Illyrian Dragon, a body which deals with the decentralisation of fine arts in Croatia, this is an issue close to his heart.

I wanted to make this number full of different people, colourful and psychedelic,” he says of his design for Rijeka 2020 European Capital of Culture, “and to represent Rijeka as a ‘port of diversity’ – which is also the slogan for Rijeka as the European Capital of Culture.”

Pekmezmed
Pekmezmed may have earned her degree from Zagreb’s Academy of Fine Arts in the discipline of sculpture, but she’s as a visual artist that she now chooses to work. Her focus lies in making drawings, illustrations, paintings and murals. She lives in Rijeka and is responsible for creating the free online magazine Frresh. “The arts were always held in high regards here in Rijeka,” she says of the Rijeka 2020 European Capital of Culture status, “but with this title comes a lot of new opportunities and, more importantly, funding for some new cultural projects.”

“There’s are a lot of symbols that connect Rijeka within this illustration,” she says of her design for Rijeka 2020 European Capital Of Culture. “The sea, the river and the mountains, sun and rain that can change rapidly in Rijeka(land) and the colours green and blue, which are the main colours of our coastal and mountain region. I particularly enjoyed drawing the two ladies who represent our winds, Jugo and Bura. They are the two most important (and powerful) winds that blow through our area. Also, the little boats remind me of Fiumanka, a famous regatta that is held annually in Rijeka.”

Ira Payer
Ira Payer is a Zagreb-based visual communications designer, a passionate design advocate and the director of Design District festival, a week long party of exhibitions, workshops and pop-up installations set around Zagreb’s Maršala Tita’s neighbourbood. As founder of Superstudio, she is the co-creator of the iconic ‘Croatia As It Is’ bags, emblazoned with unexpectedly ironic slogans: “I wouldn’t say Croatian design could be considered a brand yet, certainly not in a Finnish or Scandinavian way. But we must take into consideration how little is invested in it in our country. However, individual designs and designers are already internationally recognised. And there is definitely a huge potential for future development.”

According to Ira: “Rijeka is an extraordinary city - open, energetic, creative, forward-thinking, and deserves the title of the European Capital of Culture. Besides Rijeka’s outstanding artists and cultural works, I am an great admirer of the city’s industrial heritage as well as its superb modernist architecture, which inspired me for the illustration. What I like most about Rijeka’s 2020 programme is how its heritage is revaluated to inspire and cherish the cultural progress. So, Rijeka is becoming a sort of reinvinted city.”
Rijeka Top 20

Port and transport hub in Kvarner, Rijeka merits exploration thanks to a fascinating past and a lively city centre.

1 Museum of Modern & Contemporary Art
Currently the poster boy of Rijeka’s cultural scene on account of its recent move to new premises in the ex-industrial Benčić complex, the museum has one of the richest collections of contemporary art anywhere in Croatia. There is no permanent exhibition, however; items from the museum’s crammed vaults are regularly rotated in a highly imaginative cycle of changing, themed exhibitions. There is also a busy schedule of solo and group shows featuring artists from elsewhere. Occupying part of the so-called H-building, which began life as a sugar refinery before becoming a cigarette factory then a tractor-making workshop, the museum is an outstanding example of how to adapt 19th-century industrial architecture for contemporary cultural use.

ÆÆ Krešimirova 26c (051 492 611, mmsu.hr).

2 Rijeka Carnival
Croatia’s main annual public celebration, February’s Rijeka Carnival now attracts some 100,000 visitors to the city centre. Consisting of several events in the run-up to the main parade on the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, the former pagan ritual still features belfringers in terrifying masks and costumes, the Zvončari, who cast out the dark of winter and summon the coming of spring. Find a place early on Rijeka’s main street, the Korzo, and be prepared for late partying.

ÆÆ (rijecki-karneval.hr/en).

3 Municipium
Museum is set in a grand Habsburg-era building, tucked away in a quiet courtyard right in the centre of town. Door staff might greet you at the entrance, but don’t worry, this provides a very informal dining experience, down to the day’s menu chalked up on a board. This menu is usually fish-oriented, reasonably priced considering the quality of service, presentation and the fare itself. The wine list runs to scores of (mainly Croatian) varieties, a decent number available by the glass. Note also the cut-price lunch specials, marende.

ÆÆ Trg Riječke rezolucije 5 (051 213 000, facebook.com/municipiumrijeka).

4 King’s Caffe
The first of Rijeka’s coffee-bars to get really serious about craft beer, this is still one of the best places to enjoy a pint or two. Not only is there a long menu of choices on draft or by the bottle, there’s also a neat but cozy auntie’s living-room ambience

ÆÆ facebook.com/rijecka-kafetarica.
to the whole place, with framed pictures and old-school wallpaper overlooking a solid collection of dark wood tables.  

5 City Museum

Set in a pavilion alongside the Governor’s Palace — and thus alongside the History & Maritime Museum, making it a convenient first port of call for any first-time visitor to Rijeka — the three-floor City Museum has a modest permanent exhibition but stages a number of fascinating temporary ones. Exhibition subjects tend to concentrate on Rijeka’s seafaring past.

ÆÆ

Muzejski trg 1/1 (051 336 711, muzej-rijeka.hr).

6 Tarsa

Hidden away among quiet suburban lanes behind Trsat’s sports hall, Tarsa could almost be a village inn, and it’s not surprising that it has become one of Rijeka’s prime venues for a slap-up traditional meal. Despite being a modern building the décor is decidedly trad, with plenty of exposed brick and wooden beams. The menu revolves around lavish platters of local meat and fish, grilled or baked; home-made pastas with tangy goulash accompaniment; and some of the Kvarner Gulf’s best pancakes to round things off. Pay particular attention to the platters for two, specialties such as the Franjo Glavinić pork chop stuffed with pršut and mozzarella or the Maksimilijan squid with baked potatoes and vegetables are well worth the extra outlay.

ÆÆ

Josipa Kuflaneka 10 (051 452 089).

7 Brasserie AS

Formerly the Belgian Beer Brasserie and still bearing decorative traces of the Benelux, this prominent terrace bar with an atmospheric interior remains one of Rijeka’s prime spots to drink in Rijeka. Located so close to the harbour you can see ships passing from the tables outside, it’s worth a longer linger for its hearty Belgian-style cuisine and, most notably, beers in draught and bottled form from the land of beer.

ÆÆ

Trg Republike Hrvatske 2 (051 212 148, ugostiteljstvo-as.com).

8 Grand Hotel Bonavia

Rijeka’s classiest option, part of the Umag-based Plava Laguna group and right in the heart of town, this is a modern business hotel with a spa and gym, sauna cabins and massage and beauty treatments have also been introduced. The 120 rooms are tastefully done out, the in-house Kamov restaurant is one of the best in town, and the terrace café overlooks the city.

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Dolac 4 (051 357 100, 051 357 980, bonavia.hr).

9 Conca d’Oro

With a great city-centre location and a reputation as one of the best places in town, ‘The Golden Conch’ can charge higher prices than most. Along with the usual seafood offerings, appetisers include fresh carpaccio with capers, and marinated salmon. The day’s catch is displayed on ice, and includes a wide selection of molluscs. A decent range of Croatian wines may accompany. The hefty salads can work as a small meal, followed by a number of cheeses. Snappy service adds to a pleasant atmosphere.

ÆÆ

Kružna 12A (051 213 782, fb.me/concadorori).

10 Peek&Poke

Both a museum and a club for enthusiasts, Peek&Poke is one of Rijeka’s most unique attractions. Dedicated to the early days of computers and computerised games, Peek&Poke also looks to reassess the reputation of those pioneers, mocked at the time, whose groundbreaking ideas eventually made our lives easier or more entertaining. Sir Clive Sinclair, for example, is given a stellar biography. All told, some 2,000 consoles, terminals and calculators are exhibited, either in display cases or for hands-on investigation.

ÆÆ

Ivana Grohovca 2A (051 562 100, 051 780 5709, peekpoke.hr).
11 CukařKafé
CukařKafé is a cross between a modern art gallery, a film set for a children’s fairy-tale adventure and a passenger steamer cruising up the River Nile. Everything about the place exudes character: the list of specialties here includes not just Duvel and Chimay but several lesser-known Belgian brands as well. And unless you specify otherwise, tea will be served with a dandy slice of fresh orange. facebook.com/CukařKafé

12 Konoba Na Kantu
This once-tiny seafood bistro has expanded onto the neighbouring room and kitted itself out with new furniture – its reputation for serving some of Rijeka’s best local seafood is now as well. And unless you specify otherwise, tea will be served with a dandy slice of fresh orange. facebook.com/CukařKafé

13 Karolina
A slick, modern glass-enclosed art gallery, a film set between a modern interior and admire the trays of just-caught fish and crustaceans chilling behind the glass. Point at your choice and wait for it to be expertly grilled, perhaps dressed lightly with olive oil and black truffle, salt and then served up as a minimalist masterpiece. The car park terrace gets the sun and gives a view of the docks. You can find fancier, but not much better. facebook.com/KarolinaRijeka

14 Bistro Mornar
Although Mornar is next to the docks and the marine terminal, the views from its L-shaped corner terrace include just a snippet of the sea and a whole load of car park. Forget the scenery: hearty meat dishes here satisfy, and the fish comes right off the boats or from the nearby market, which means it’s fresher and cheaper than most places in town. Join hungry locals and sailors as you tuck into generous platters of calamari, sardines or superior freshly caught whitefish at amazing prices. facebook.com/bistroMornar

15 Celtic Caffe Bard
On a small square on a hill in Rijeka’s Old Town, a Guinness sign announces this quaint old-style wood-and-brass pub with exposed brick. There’s Kilkenny beer too, but thankfully it’s unsexier than just another faux Irish joint. The walls are cluttered with interesting local art, and the bar and upstairs gallery are packed with interesting local people, mostly in their twenties and thirties. Music ranges from electronic to occasional Irish folk bands. Seats outside, too. facebook.com/CelticCaffeBard

16 Trsat Castle
Visit this fort for the superb panoramic view alone, best enjoyed from the terrace cafe beneath the Nugent mausoleum – the Kvarner Bay spreads out before you. Irish-born Austro-Hungarian naval commander Laval Nugent-Westmeath fought Napoleon and rebuilt the medieval Frankopan fortress to house his family and his art collection – his hoard of Greek vases can now be seen in Zagreb’s Museum of Archeology. The mausoleum is worth a look, partly if you like your Central-European history, partly to see how the dynasty looked back then. facebook.com/Trsat.Trsat

17 The Beertija
Uphill from the centre in Trsat but well worth seeking out, this Rijeka branch of Zagreb’s Beertija bar sticks to the same formula – a superb range of bottled beers from all over the world, and well-chosen weekend DJs. Look out, too, for indie nights, Drinkers tribute bands and all kinds of excuses for a party. facebook.com/The-Beertija-Rijeka-401227149382956

18 Hotel Jadran
Jadran contains 66 nicely fitted rooms in an envious seashore location, set by Rijeka’s first stretch of swimable sea with its own stop on the No. 1 bus route east of town in Pećine. The Jadran (‘Adriatic’) has been a spot for bathing, since it opened in 1914. There’s a supplement charged for sea-facing rooms. Half- and full-board deals are available. facebook.com/JadranHoteli.hr

19 Trsatika
Fussably located up in Trsat, this eatery, part pizzeria, part grill offers high-grade versions of renowned standards, with a terrace view. A spot to celebrate – the staff are great with kids, the food is high quality and the location is stunning. facebook.com/Trsatika

20 Governor’s Palace
Built in the 1890s by Hungarian architect Alajos Hauszmann, it is one of the handsomest buildings in Budapest, the Governor’s Palace is worth exploration not just for the cultural attractions within and around it – the Rijeka City Museum and the History & Maritime Museum but because of its own history. A century ago, when the collapse of the Habsburg Empire, Italian poet Gabriele D’Annunzio seized control of Rijeka and installed himself in the palace. Mussolini duly removed him but for that short period, Rijeka was the poet’s personal domain. facebook.com/Governors-Palace
What to see

Capuchin Church
As your bus draws into Rijeka, pretty much the first thing you see towering alongside is this unusual architectural combination that is Our Lady of Lourdes, aka the Capuchin Church. Constructed over nearly three decades in the early 20th century, the church is best known for its distinctive brickwork in alternating colours, and the elegant twin staircase. Scale it, and you are afforded a view of the nearby seafront. If you’ve just arrived, it also allows you a chance to get your bearings. → Kapucinske stube 5 (051 335 233, glurdska-kapucini.blogspot.com).

City Museum
Convenient first port of call and introduction to Rijeka. See Rijeka Top 20. → Muzejski trg 1/1 (051 336 711, muzej-rijeka.hr)

City Tower
The original gateway to the city from the port in medieval times, this landmark on Rijeka’s main drag was converted into a tower by Filbert Bazarig in the later 1700s after much of the town was destroyed by an earthquake. The architect was not only instructed by his masters to create something of fitting Habsburg finery but to leave the archway intact. A century later, the City Tower gained a clock, thus bringing the monument into common usage as a point of rendezvous. ‘Meet me under the clock’, say locals, ‘Pod uriloj’. → Trg Ivana Koblera 1

Croatian National Theatre
Both an architectural and cultural landmark, Rijeka’s Croatian National Theatre was designed by the same team of architects as its namesakes in Split and Zagreb: Austrian Ferdinand Fellner and his German partner Hermann Helmer. In fact, the pair created dozens of theatres across Europe, from Odessa to Zürich, this one opened in 1885. Though Croatian-language performances here may be of limited interest, there’s also ballet and opera on the agenda, and the interior is worth a look around – Gustav Klimt and brother Ernst helped paint the ceiling before its grand unveiling, a performance of Verdi’s Aida. → (051 355 900, hnk-zajc.hr)

Governor’s Palace
Grand residence of the city governor, now home to two museums. See Rijeka Top 20. → Manjacing 1

History & Maritime Museum
Somewhat overshadowed by Alanos Hauszmann’s grandiose Governor’s Palace in which it is housed, this old-school museum contains a modest collection of period costumes, coins, instruments, chairs and weaponry. Displays of replica ships reflect Rijeka’s proud past and tradition. → Manjacing 1 (051 213 578, ppmhp.hr/en)

Korzo
Rijeka’s main street, parallel to the sea and the Riva, has been in the heart of things ever since it was the Corso, showcase thoroughfare of Fiume. Terrace cafés and shopsline this pedestrianised stretch, where the Rijeka Carnival unfolds in all its February finery. In terms of actual sights, there’s the Clock Tower and nearby, the Radio Rijeka building, more of a curiosity. All the other main museums are a short walk away.

Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art
Current poster boy of Rijeka’s cultural scene. See Rijeka Top 20. → Krešimirova 26C (051 492 611, mmsu.hr/en)

Peek&Poke
Quirky collection of early computer technology. See Rijeka Top 20. → Ivana Grohovca 2A (091 780 5709, peekpoke.hr/welcome)

Rijeka Natural History Museum
Behind the Governor’s Palace it overlooks, Rijeka’s Natural History Museum established its large collection of specimens from the Kvarner Bay, Gorski kotar and Istria, thanks to private collectors from the mid 19th century onwards. Key displays include one of sharks and rays, and a geological history of the Adriatic Sea. → Lorenzov prolaz 1 (051 553 669, prirodoslovni.com/eng)

St Vitus’s Cathedral
Standing at the edge of Rijeka’s Old Town, St Vitus’s Church is a Venetian-inspired construction from the 1600s, topped by a Baroque rotunda. Inside, the crucifix was the source of many a medieval legend. → Glize 1

Trsat Castle
Panoramic fort and mausoleum of an Irish-born naval commander. See Rijeka Top 20. → Partizanski put 9a, Trsat. (trsatigradina.com)
Where to eat

Bistro La Rose
A cozy bistro with outdoor seating on one of the Old-Town’s tiny piazzas, La Rose offers a well-executed but affordable blend of French-inspired fare and Kvarner-Istrian staples. The Gallic side of La Rose’s character is most evident in the quick-lunch dishes such as onion soup, bouillabaisse and quiche lorraine. Local inspiration lies behind the truffle-garnished pastas, seafood risottos, fillets of sea bass, although everything is served with Mediterranean bistro flair. The ambience – rose-themed decor and jazzy music – makes it an ideal spot for a lunchtime tête-à-tête or an intimate evening meal.

ÆÆ
Andrije Medulića 8 (051 315 504, facebook.com/bistrolarose)

Bistro Mornar
Hearty meat dishes and fresh fish. See Rijeka Top 20.

ÆÆ
Riva Boduli 5A (051 312 222, facebook.com/bistromornar)

Placa 51
Alively place occupying an enviable corner spot on a harbour-facing street, this is another good tip for a great Rijeka lunch. The menu is strong in local staples in the 80kn-100kn range such as ombolo (lightly smoked pork chop) and fillets of fish, and there’s a daily list of cheaper chalked-up specials that rely very much on what’s seasonally available – and what the chef can get his hands on at the nearby market. The style of decor and presentation is contemporary bistro-bar rather than folksy inn, with an open kitchen indoors and cushioned benches out on the terrace. Scrumptious own-made cakes are another major asset.

ÆÆ
Riva Boduli 3A (051 546 454, facebook.com/placa51)

Primorska Konoba
The ‘Coastal Inn’ goes for the rustic look inside, with checked tablecloths and domestic nick-nacks aplenty; however it’s the chic glass-enclosed terrace hovering above an animated Old Town corner that makes this such a good place to be at lunchtime. The other attraction is of course the food: mainly traditional stuff reinvented for the requirements of today’s breezy urban eater. Many of the things listed as marende (‘elevenses’) actually function as light lunches, particularly the traditional barley-and-bean stew known as jota. Home-made pasta choices such as hand-rolled cigar-shaped pljukanci with mushrooms or tagliatelle with prawns (both hovering in the 70kn zone) will fill up with nary a lump, while squid stuffed with cheese and rice, splashed liberally with a tangy tomato sauce, is a stand-out among the mains.

ÆÆ
Krojačka 1 (095 671 6717, facebook.com/primorskakonoba)

O’Hara
O’Hara’s are high-end pizzas; some double if not triple the price you might pay for similar elsewhere Croatia, but all within the affordability of tourists or locals visiting for a treat. The pizzas themselves are exceptional, comprised of the kind of authentic dough even the most pizza-exhausted visitor to Croatia would never tire of eating. Situated on the riva, with several boats moored on the other side of the road, the best place to enjoy a meal here in warm or mild weather is outside on the terrace. Booking in advance may be advisable to ensure a spot here as O’Hara is justly popular. The menus are the individual paper placemats, which list the pizzas and sizable Italian style sandwiches available. Busy over summer weekends in the weekday evenings, O’Hara Rijeka is equally popular in winter when the action moves indoors, the terrace last year being reserved for the alfresco cooking of mulled wine and sausages. If you’re a pizza fan or (ambitiously) aiming to eat only one pizza in Rijeka, O’Hara should be first on your list.

ÆÆ
Riva 12a, Rijeka (51 568 888, facebook.com/ohararijeka)

ON OUR RADAR

**Bistro La Rose**

**Bistro Mornar**

**Placa 51**

**Primorska Konoba**

**O’Hara**

Time Out Rijeka for Visitors 2018
Where to eat

**Boonker**
With a large, shaded terrace right on Rijeka’s main waterfront, Boonker has already drawn a crowd despite its rather strange name. Calling itself a ‘pizzeria and lounge bar’, it does a decent job of serving pizzas (from 40kn, house Boonker with gorgonzola and Gran Padano 61kn) but can probably leave the lounge barring to a more suitable locale nearby. The fritto misto is a wise buy at 65kn but most are here to enjoy the sea views rather than undertake any serious culinary adventure.

آن
Istarsko pristanište 1 (051 401 738, boonker.hr)

**King’s Food Pub**
The successful recipe of popular beer bar King’s Caffe transported to a new location, this time with burgers. A full range of craft and specialist beers is on the menu as well as a list of beef patties and burritos, in a neo-Gothic interior complete with medieval-style murals of pennant-wielding knights. It’s a great place to sit outside during the summer, with tables facing the National Theatre.

آن
Verdijeva 7B (051 561 916, kingscaffe.com)

**Konoba Blato**
In a sturdy wood-and-tile cellar on the pedestrianised square where the two main canals meet, this small, dimly lit eatery makes home-style seafood and hearty meat dishes in a pleasant family atmosphere. The fish is always fresh and well-prepared, as is the octopus salad to accompany it. There are only half-a-dozen tables, busy during work breaks; the tiny bar has a few stools, nearly all occupied by locals. Day-time and early evening only.

آن
Titov Trg 8C (051 336 970, facebook.com/pages/Konoba-Blato/141828369229717)

**Konoba Feral**
A handy little downtown eaterie specialising in seafood, with a few meaty options too. Frog stew with potatoes and kale is one of the more unusual of these; otherwise the menu features the standard white sea fish and scampi. Mozzarella salad makes a nice change from seafood, and Löwenbräu beer is something different from the stock Istrian wines. A selection of cheap daily specials is chalked up on a board outside. A front terrace is open in summer.

آن
Matije Gupca 5B (051 212 274, konoba-feral.com)

**Konoba Fiume**
Just metres from the main market, near the port and the Korzo, stands the stone-walled, brick-arched, high-ceilinged Fiume, with its daily offering of grilled ray, mackerel, sardines, tuna, squid, goulash and cod stew on Fridays. Simple meals, cooked the local way, are based on the freshest seasonal ingredients from the nearby market. Decent local wines and affordable prices can be expected, as well as a warm welcome from the staff.

آن
Vatroslava Lisinskog 12 (051 312 318, facebook.com/pages/Konoba-Fiume/1463543271060490)

**Konoba Na Kantunu**
This seafood tavern serves some of Rijeka’s best seafood. See Rijeka Top 20.

آن
Istarsko pristanište 4 (051 312 271, facebook.com/Konoba-na-Kantunu-840141123830483)

**Konoba Nebuloza**
A friendly little restaurant next to the Rečina Canal provides perfectly prepared fresh seafood at reasonable prices in a comfortable atmosphere. It serves a lot of the fish others do, but the menu here lets you know whether it has been farmed instead of caught wild. House special starters include smoked tuna and goulash or lamb stew with local luscious noodles. Meat-eaters get a choice of toppings such as ruffle sauce or rosemary and capers for their thick, juicy steak. The amicable waiters will not only show you the catch of the day, but tell you what’s freshest even if it’s something less expensive, like calamari. The side room has big windows with a great view of the canal below.

آن
Vatroslava Lisinskog 2B (051 374 501, konobanebuloza.com)

**Maslina na Zelenom trgu**
‘Olive on Green Square’ – even though it’s actually on Koblerov trg, right in the city centre – echoes the time when Rijeka’s main produce market was here. Chef Dušan Džimbeg has duly created two types of selections, ‘Gourmand Mediterranean’ and ‘Small Menu’. Those on
Where to eat

A budget shouldn’t worry – dishes in either category average 70kn, with the exception of the smoked tuna and beefsteak tagliata. You can always opt for pizza, though it would be a shame not to investigate the various carpaccios and panzanellas. Homely yet contemporary, Maslina also makes a point of being child-friendly, with high chairs provided.

Maslina

Koblerov trg (051 563 563, mnzt.hr)

Municipium

Grand Municipalium is one of the top tables in town. See Rijeka Top 20.

ÆÆ

Trg Riječke rezolucije 5 (051 213 000, facebook.com/municipiumrijeka)

Placa 51

A lively place occupying an enviable corner spot on a harbour-facing street, this is another good tip for a great Rijeka lunch. See On Our Radar.

ÆÆ

Riva Boduli 3A (051 546 454, facebook.com/placa51)

Samovar Bar

A great little café with cushions, carpets and chandeliers setting an old-fashioned living-room tone, and with outdoor seating right in front of one of Rijeka’s most Instagrammable street murals. As well as being a popular coffee- and cake stop, it’s also an outlet for locally based tea-blending outfit Samovar (whose shop is just across the way). Sporting energising names such as ‘Torpedo’ or ‘Rijeka Riser’, their blends mix strong black and green teas with floral flavours and aromatic spices.

ÆÆ

Trg Matije Vlačića 1 (051 215 521, facebook.com/SamovarBARijeka)

Book Caffe Dnevni Boravak

Living-room-style hangout that will appeal to those who like a bit of culture with their coffee – the floor-to-ceiling shelves are absolutely stacked with books, CDs and vinyl LPs, while a small annex serves as a cute art gallery. Literary readings and live music feature several times a month; on other days it serves as a mellow social hub for the city’s reading, writing and chatting community.

ÆÆ

Ciottina 12A (no phone, facebook.com/BookCaffeDB)

Cont

It’s rare for a hotel café to function as a happening bar that’s good enough to pull in outside custom. It’s a trick that Cont (as in Continental, the name of the hotel to which it’s attached) has pulled off rather well by turning itself into a lunch bar and craft-beer pub, with a selection of craft ales from the St Vid (Rijeka) and Medvedgrad (Zagreb) stables, and a lot more in bottles. There’s a week-day offering of marende (‘elevenses’) chalked up on a board outside (available from 10am to 1pm Mon-Fri, they’re great value if you’re ready for an early lunch), and an all-day menu of burgers, pastas and goulashy stews. With a wedge of outdoor seating under lime trees, it’s a great place to kick back.

ÆÆ

Šetalište A. K. Miošića 1 (051 282 374, facebook.com/pivnicacont)

ON OUR RADAR

Municipium

Placa 51

Cont

Samovar Bar

Book Caffe Dnevni Boravak

Cont

Samovar Bar

Book Caffe Dnevni Boravak

Cont

Samovar Bar

Book Caffe Dnevni Boravak
Where to eat

Pizzeria Ex
A little hard to find in a maze of similar-looking streets up the hill, Restaurant Ex hasn’t been found by the tourism industry yet. It’s nondescript from the outside, next to a café that often has loud football on TV, but is tastefully decorated inside and has an open smoking area. Prices are suspiciously low; two people can stuff themselves, with dessert, for 140kn or so, and the food is excellent. From pleskavica to pastas to pizzas to various meat and fish dishes, everything is good quality and service is speedy. Great for those on a budget who don’t want to resort to fast-food chains; it also does takeaways. 
Úlica Miroslava Krleže 11 (051 624 471, facebook.com/pizzeria.ex)

Primorska Konoba
The “coastal inn” goes for the rustic look inside, with a rustic look outside, with the chic glass-enclosed terrace hovering above an animated Old-Town corner that makes this such a good place to be at lunchtime. See On Our Radar.
Krojačka 1 (095 671 6717, facebook.com/primorskakonoba)

Ristorante Spagho
This neat little corner restaurant with part rustic, part minimalist interior has a decent selection of pastas, including own-made ravioli, and gnocchi dishes. It’s otherwise worth saving your appetite for the steaks, including the house variety with red wine, pine nuts, prosciutto and fried rocket. For dessert, the seasonal cake is made on the premises. 
Ivana Zajca 24A (051 311 122, ristorante-spagho.com)

Submarine Burger
The successful Zagreb boutique burger operation has branched out to Rijeka with the recipe largely unchanged – a handful of gourmet-burger options (from 44kn) backed up by some imaginative salads.
Where to eat

(available either as a garnish or a light lunch in its own right) and rough-cut fries. Outdoor seating on a corner of one of the Old Town’s most animated piazzas.

→ Kalmarov trg (051 581 393, submariniburger.com/locations/rijeka)

**Tarsa**
Rustic Tarsa up in Trsat has become one of Rijeka’s prime venues for a slap-up traditional meal. See On Our Radar.

ÆÆ
Koblerov trg 2 (051 581 363, submariniburger.com/locations/rijeka)

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ÆÆ
Josipa Kuflaneka 10 (051 452 089, facebook.com/pages/Konoba-Tarsa/183811574986571)

**Trsatika**
Great location, great grilled delights. See Rijeka Top 20.

ÆÆ
Šetalište J Rakovca 33, Trsat (051 451 716, restaurant-trsatica.com/en)

**Volta**
Opened in a location that’s housed restaurants for years, this classic konoba, with white stucco walls and exposed masonry and ceiling rafters, serves excellent seafood and good wine in a cozy setting on a hill leading up from the sea in the town centre. The friendly server gives special care to a small dining room with only six tables and a soundtrack of soft jazz. Coastal Croatian standards such as octopus salad, fish soup, calamari and sea bass are handled expertly – the latter served with the house special sauce of rosemary, lemon and capers. Good local wines accompany, including the house red Plavac Mali and house white Malvasia.

ÆÆ
Pod Voltun 15 (051 564 297, facebook.com/voltarijeka)

**Conca d’Oro**
A good location and a reputation as one of the best places in town. See Rijeka Top 20.

ÆÆ
Kružna 12A (051 213 782, fb.me/concadorori)

WHERE TO DRINK

**Bar Bar**
Still feeling new after its 2015 opening and a fixture on the Old Town drinking circuit, Bar Bar describes itself as a wine and tapas bar – and, although it’s the drink that most people are here for, there’s always a more-than-tempting selection of nibbles ranging from pršut and cheese to marinated fish and steak tartare. Bar Bar has made sensitive use of the ancient building it’s housed in, with bare bricks and ancient stonework adding character to the snug interior, the action frequently spills out on to the street on warm weekend nights.

ÆÆ
Pod Kaštelom 3 (097 712 9949, bar-bar.eu)

**The Beertija**
Up in Trsat but well worth the trek for its quality beers and sought-after sounds. See Rijeka Top 20.

ÆÆ
Slavka Krautzeka 12 (051 452 183, facebook.com/The-Beertija-Rijeka-401627149938396)

**Book Caffe Dnevni Boravak**
Your coffee here comes with original art and stacks of books, CDs and vinyl. See On Our Radar.

ÆÆ
Ciottina 12A (no phone, facebook.com/BookCaffeDB)

**Brasserie AS**
Belgian within, Adriatic once you’re sat on the terrace near the port. See Rijeka Top 20.

ÆÆ
Trg republike Hrvatske 2 (051 212 335, ugostiteljstvo-as.com)

**Celtic Caffè Bard**
On a small square on a hill in Rijeka’s Old Town, an Irish pub with a genuine local following. See Rijeka Top 20.

ÆÆ
Trg Grivica 6B (051 215 235, facebook.com/Bard-128484343907485)

**Cont**
This café at the Hotel Continental has a life all of its own. See On Our Radar.

ÆÆ
Šetalište A. K. Miošića 1 (051 282 374, facebook.com/pivnicacont)

**CukariKafè**
The funky CukariKafè offers...
Where to drink

Belgian beers in a unique interior. See Rijeka Top 20.

Fiilodrammatica
Bookshop Cafe
This smart café with a busy terrace has been one of Rijeka’s most popular meeting points since the late 19th century, when the Filodrammatica functioned as a municipal cultural society. Nowadays the caryatid-encrusted Filodrammatica building is shared between a brightly lit bookshop and this plush café at the front, with its sumptuously upholstered benches and the odd chandelier. As well as coffee, cakes and alcoholic drinks, it serves a range of breakfasts and light-lunch sandwiches.

Nad Urom
Accessed by scaling a flight of stairs through a Tito-era shopping centre, Nad Urom is one of those unique places you’re very happy to find. Its terrace not only overlooks the Korzo from its winning vantage point but faces the clock of the City Tower, giving you a bird’s eye view of Rijeka’s landmark sight. Standard drinks at standard prices, with TV football thrown in.

Kosi Toranj
Kosi Toranj has a winning terrace on a small hidden square with an aged leaning tower that gives the establishment its name. The interior is an attractive needle-shaped room, with two long glass walls, big art and low, lounge seating. A popular place to watch the game, too.

Where to drink

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Where to drink

River Pub
Beautifully upholstered furniture sits on an old tiled floor, while a sturdy bar counter holds up taps of Bass, Caffrey’s, Guinness and Kilkenny. The framed photographs from around Istria are a nice touch, old regional maps too, with a few busts of Irish writers. Set behind a big, wooden door, halfway down from the museums. → Placa Spilje 12 (051 304 073, facebook.com/riverpub.rijeka.1)

Sabrage
Up in Trsat, this lovely spot is well stocked and well staffed. Along with classic cocktails and long drinks, there’s a long wine list, a Tinto Reserva hiding among the Zlatni Plavac and Dingač. Whiskies such as 14-year-old Oban and ten-year-old Talisker can be sipped in an elegantly carved wooden interior decorated with portraits of famous locals. Nice hot chocolates for winter too. Convenient for a visit to Trsat Castle. → Petra Zrinskog 2, Trsat (051 218 088, sabragebar.com)

NIGHTLIFE

Boa
This branch of a successful Malinska club of the same name is a see-and-be-seen scene full of pumping music and pretty people dressed for success. The décor is mostly white, coloured by fancy lighting. There’s lots of posing pre-midnight, but eventually the disco, hip-hop and techno soundtrack gets dancers moving and the crowd mingling. By day it’s a slick café. → Ante Starčevićeva 8 (091 339 9339, facebook.com/CLUB-BOA-Malinska-Rijeka-Rovinj-171347653002)

Champagne Bar Pommery
Celebrating its tenth anniversary in 2018, Pommery is one of those places that may not be for everybody but can be great fun with the right people. Very central, with a promen- ment terrace that gets busy by dusk. Pommery hosts DJs and drinks promotion nights and charges that little bit extra to encourage the kind of clientele who would be out of place at urban hangouts for a younger crowd. → Hans 33 (091 444 1666, facebook.com/Champagne-Bar-Pommery-341016331042930)

Karolina
A slick, modern glass-enclosed party spot on the main harbour. See Rijeka Top 20. → Gat Karoline Riječke (091 490 4042, facebook.com/KarolinaBarRijeka)

Klub Bačva
Bačva is a convivial bar by day and a place of varied entertainment by night, with live music, readings and sundry random performances staged. The beer range is huge and seats outside allow you to watch the comings and goings of a busy downtown street. → Drug 8 (095 553 7659, facebook.com/Klub.Baca.rijeka)

Phanas Pub
Down at the harbourfront, this place is best experienced late at night when the two-floor wooden pub with maritime knick-knacks is packed to the rafters with partying twenty-somethings, the room ringing a commercial dance and rock soundtrack. It gets busy late on and difficult to get inside. Guinness, Kilkenny and Stella, wines and cheap cocktails complement the standard Ožujsko beer, but the drinks here are secondary to the social buzz. → Ivana Zajca 9 (051 213 377, facebook.com/phanaspub)

Rakhia Bar
Specialising in rakija, the local form of grappa that comes in all kinds of flavours, Rakhia is essentially a lively urban nightspot which programmes live music on Tuesdays, and DJs and parties on Thursdays through Saturdays. Scattered in between are rakija tastings for extensive sampling. → Andrije Mendulića 5 (091 937 8345, facebook.com/RakhiaBarRijeka)
Tunnel
This tunnel dug into a railway embankment is heaving most nights, especially at weekends when there’s usually a band and DJs playing techno and/or electronics. A vaulted stone ceiling, lasers and a good-looking crowd in their twenties and thirties comprise the decor. Getting to the bar, or just finding a place to stand, can be a challenge. The few tables out front fill up in warmer weather.
-Haugi 12 (no phone, haugi.com/tunel.klub)

WHERE TO STAY

Botel Marina
Moored on Rijeka’s city-centre waterfront, this Danish-built ship used to ferry Swedes from Stockholm to the Kvarner islands before seeing action during the Siege of Dubrovnik in the 1990s. Her sailing days over, the former Kronprinses-san Ingrid was then moved from Mali Lošinj to here in Rijeka, where she was kitted out as a 35-room, three-star lodging with an extensive restaurant and 24-hour reception. A gym is planned for the near future.
ÆÆ
Adamićev gat (051 410 162, botel-marina.com)

Grand Hotel Bonavia
Rijeka’s classiest option, part of the Umag-based Flava Laguna group and right in the heart of town. See Rijeka Top 20.
ÆÆ
Dolac 4 (051 357 100, bonavia.hr)

Hotel Continental
Upgraded to a three-star after a long-needed renovation, the central Continental is in a bulky 100-year-old structure overlooking the canal. Reasonably priced, comfortable and convenient, it’s an excellent choice for those who need an affordable stay in the city centre. The in-house Cont bar has garnered its own crowd thanks to its decent range of craft beers.
ÆÆ
Šetalište Andrije Kačića-Miočića 1 (051 372 008, jadran-hoteli.hr/continental)

Hotel Jadran
Jadran contains 66 nicely fitted rooms in an enviable shoreside location. See Rijeka Top 20.
ÆÆ
Šetalište XIII Divizije 46 (051 216 600, jadran-hoteli.hr)

Neboder
If you’re looking for a cheapie in town and the Continental is full, come to the aptly named 14-floor, 54-room ‘Skyscraper’ by the flyover. Following renovations a few years ago it now has an underground car park and café. The wonderful Socialist-era lobby has, sadly, been replaced by something more modern – while the rooms remain adequate.
ÆÆ
Strossmayerova 1 (051 373 538, jadran-hoteli.hr/neboder)

Youth Hostel Rijeka
Opened in 2006, the former Villa Kozulić is a modern, 61-bed youth hostel, the first in town. Well sited in Pećine, east of town by the sea on the No.1 bus route, the YHA offers standard dorm beds and three doubles in the attic, all with breakfast included, a snip for the price and location. Open all year and with 24-hour reception.
ÆÆ
Šetalište XIII Divizije 23 (051 406 420, hfhs.hr/en/hostels/rijeka-youth-hostel-481)
GETTING THERE & AROUND

Rijeka airport (051 842 040, rijeka-airport.hr) is on the northern tip of the island of Krk, near Omišalj, 25km (15.5 miles) south of town. A bus meets arrivals (45mins, 50kn) and runs to Rijeka’s main bus station at trg Žabica. Taxis should have a set fee of 255kn, but journeys to more distant parts of town can be at least 300kn.

Rijeka is northern Croatia’s biggest transport hub and port. Jadrolinija catamarans serve Cres and Mali Lošinj, and Rab and Novalla. Tickets are bought from the Jadrolinija office (051 666 111, www.jadrolinija.hr/en) at Riva 16. The bus terminus at trg Žabica is close to the city centre. There are frequent services from Zagreb (2hrs 30mins) and regular ones from Split (8hrs 30mins) and Zadar (4hrs 30mins), operated by different companies.

The train station is further west from the bus terminus, and so slightly further from town. There are three direct services a day from Zagreb (around four hours) and currently one direct overnight service from Budapest. See www.hzpp.hr/en for details. You should only need to use the city bus network if you’re going to Trsat (No.2) or Pećine (No.1) – the centre is compact and walkable. Tickets are 10kn on board, or 15kn from kiosks, valid for two journeys. Routes and timetables on the Croatian-language Autotrolej website (www.autotrolej.hr) should be relatively easy to work out.

RESOURCES

Clinical Hospital Center Rijeka
Krešimirova 42 (051 658 111, kbc-rijeka.hr/?lang=en). Open 24hrs daily.

Main city hospital near the train station.

Hrvatska pošta
Korzo 39 (072 303 304, www.posta.hr/en). Open 7am-8pm Mon-Fri; 7am-2pm Sat.

The most central post office, with money exchange and Western Union facilities.

Ljekarna Korzo
Korzo 22 (051 211 036, ljekarna-jadran.hr). Open 7am-8pm Mon-Fri; 7.30am-1pm Sat.

The most central pharmacy, right on the main street.

Tourist Information Centre
Korzo 14 (051 335 882, www.visitrijeka.eu). Open June-mid-Sept 8am-8pm Mon-Sat; 9am-2pm Sun. Mid-Sept-June 8am-7.30pm Mon-Fri; 9am-1.30pm Sat.

English-speaking staff provide maps, leaflets and advice.

The No. 32 bus for Opatija (25mins, 30kn) leaves every 20 minutes from the suburban bus station by the canal, passing the train station.

Where to stay

Youth Hostel Rijeka

Port and bus station
Where to shop

Borovo
Subject of a major cult in the former Yugoslavia, Borovo stock the Croatian-made Startas shoes, a brand of slinky canvas tennis shoes reinvented with a funky range of patterns and classics. The wacky patternwork shoes have been touted by international fashion media including Vogue USA.

BuRa Design Store
At less than a year old, BuRa is a baby on Rijeka’s design scene, but one with big ambitions. Located in the south east of the city centre, it sells exclusively Croatian designed goods, but also takes its store design incredibly seriously. At the far end of the store is a centrepiece changing room, spectacularly clad in a huge circle of black latex extending from floor to ceiling. In front of this is a contrasting off yellow wall with a matt surface. Inside, a chair made of recycled materials lies before a generous mirror. The changing room doubles up as a stage, BuRa positioning itself to be a multipurpose venue which communicates with Rijeka’s broader arts scene. Elegant dresses and bags make up the bulk of what’s on offer here, each of the store’s walls dedicated to one of four Croatian designers, many of whom work with new materials but using traditional methods. There are some funky, modern necklaces, accessories and home design features too.

Črota
It’s the home of the cravat. Croatia has the cravat. Croatia is the home of the cravat. It’s the national cultural symbol. Even the word ‘cravat’ comes from the Croatian word for ‘Croat’: hrvat. Not surprisingly, Croatia takes this tradition seriously. The cravats, scarves, and shawls are cut from the finest silk, with special attention paid to the design motifs — many inspired by local heritage.

Kraš Choco Bar
Over a hundred years old, one of the most famous brands in Croatia was renamed after an anti-fascist hero from World War II, Josip Kraš. The confectionery makers have since branched out from bonbons to produce wafers, tea biscuits, powders, sprinkles and cooking chocolates. Pride of place goes to Kraš Bajaderas, sweets of exquisite almond enriched almonds, all individually wrapped and oriental in flavour. Griottes have sour-cherry centres in dark chocolate coating. Ideal gifts but you may be tempted to dip in.

Šta da?
A gold-painted bicycle propped against a gold-painted railing marks the entrance to this fascinating little shop that’s simply bursting with creativity. Many of the garments, accessories and household items on display are a tribute to the art of recycling, with bags made from old sails, pillows fashioned from the leftovers of old tents, and rings made from twisted metal cutlery. Rijeka-based artists are responsible for most of the things on display. Shop owner Amna Šehović produced the prominently displayed shoulder bags and T-shirts bearing typical Rijeka catchphrases Šta da! (‘You Don’t Say!’) and Bo! (‘Whatever!’). The shop also sells wool, beads and haberdashery bits, just in case you’re seized with the desire to embark on a hobby project of your own.
Hit the beach

Rijeka’s has urban beaches and some just a short drive away. Understated and free from crowds of tourists, they offer splendid isolation.

RIJEKA IS SOMETIMES referred to as Zagreb by the sea, its Austro-Hungarian architecture and rich cultural life more like Croatia’s capital than any other city by the ocean. Many inhabitants of Rijeka will have a favourite beach and often these are a drive out of the city, but sometimes not. Hidden from view of new visitors to the city centre, Rijeka does have some very nice beaches of its own. Some are even within walking distance. Those that are not are within just a short bus ride away.

To the east of the city centre there are four beaches, Brajdica, Sablićevo, Glavanovo and Grčevo. For those acting on impulse and deciding mid-afternoon that they fancy a quick dip in the sea or sunbath by the beach, Sablićevo is perhaps the best option. One of the oldest beaches in Rijeka, it is so close to the city centre you could walk back for a sundowner in just 15 minutes. A little further to the east is Glavanovo, which benefits from shallow seas and surrounding trees – perfect for families on foot – and then finally Grčevo. These beaches have shower facilities.

To the west of Rijeka there are many more beach options including Igralište, Ploče, Bivio, Skalete, Koštanj Bay and Preluk. Most of these are more impressive than those to the east of the city. It is necessary to travel to them all by local bus.

Igralište is the nearest of these with its beach volleyball court, catering facilities and a toboggan. If you don’t visit by day, try it at night as it’s a popular hangout after dark. Next further out from the city is Ploče, a Blue Flag beach recognised for its clear waters. This extensive and open beach has access to the sea for disabled people and lifeguards plus a beach volleyball court and a complex of swimming pools.

The tree lined Bivio beach is next and has a toboggan. Just around the corner is Skalete, a beach popular for sea sports.

Koštanj Bay and Preluk are the westernmost beaches in Rijeka, with Koštanj Bay probably the beach in Rijeka best equipped for disabled visitors. There are trained lifeguards and a floating sea barrier plus showers and toilets suitable for disabled persons. Koštanj Bay is also a Blue Flag beach, recognised for clean, clear waters. Located at the point where Rijeka’s coastline takes an almost 90 degree turn into becoming the Istrian peninsula, Preluk beach is notable for catching the wind, particularly in the mornings, and is therefore popular with windsurfers and yachtsmen. It has an entrance for smaller vessels from the land.
Opatija Top 10

Grande dame of the Kvarner Riviera, Opatija still exudes Habsburg splendour.

1. **Plavi Podrum**
   This dining destination in the gastro hub of Volosko, outside Opatija, is the oldest restaurant on the Riviera. Today it’s run by Daniela Kramarić, an award-winning sommelier, backed by a cellar holding 500 varieties of wine, 60% of which are Croatian. The wine also gets used in the food, which centres around fillets of freshly caught fish served in a much more imaginative range of sauces that you’ll find in the more traditional Adriatic restaurants. You’ll get a full introduction to the Plavi Podrum style by opting for one of the tasting menus. – Maršala Tita 89 (051 278 100, plavipodrum.com).

2. **Hotel Agava**
   This villa, built in 1896, was renovated in 2006 to make a 76-room four-star hotel in a luxuriously set near the sea and the pretty Angelina Park. The rooms are stunning – polished wood floors, period-style furnishings, air-conditioning and internet. Little extras, such as international newspapers delivered to your door, and laundry and room service, offer that special touch. – Maršala Tita 109 (051 202 000, hotel-agava.hr).

3. **Café Wagner**
   A Viennese-style café invoking Opatija’s Habsburg heritage with its creamy cakes, Wagner gets mobbed for mid-afternoon treats. Superior central European desserts are prepared with seasonal local ingredients. The quality of the expressos and other brews stands up to the cakes, with beans selected from around the globe. Part of the newly rebranded Amandria Park Hotel Milenij, this café is a Viennese-style café with Biedermeier-striped furniture, art-nouveau style stained glass, Bar has a stunning interior, with a coat of art-nouveau curves and a courtyard. The Hotel Mozart Piano Bar has a stunning interior, with art-nouveau style stained glass, Biedermeier-striped furniture and piano, where local talents play pleasing background music while you have coffee and cake or slam back vodkas and imagine you’re a Habsburg. – Hemingway Opatija, Maršala Tita 138 (051 718 444, facebook.com/monokini.opatija).

4. **Hotel Miramar**
   The 1876 Villa Neptune was superbly renovated and expanded to include three guest villas, creating a full-service resort hotel with its own rocky beach. Stylish, comfortable and air-conditioned rooms have their own balcony or terrace. There’s a spa with a heated pool, whirlpool, saunas, steam room and beauty treatments. Cross the footbridge from the Lungomare for the open sea on the other. – Hotel Miramar

5. **Hemingway Opatija**
   This slick seaside space of several bars and two small dancefloors in the main local spot to drink and party. After sundown it heaves with fun-seeking holidaymakers looking to mingle over Opatija’s best cocktails. Plush, low chairs make it hard to leave the covered terrace, with its view of the marina on one side and the open sea on the other. – Plavi Podrum

6. **Hotel Mozart**
   Completely revamped by the Remisens group, Croatia’s first luxury hotel on the Adriatic, the Mozart, right on the promenade, is an imposing imperial presence in the heart of Opatija. Fans of grandeur will love the majestic size of the Crystal Ballroom, the ornate hotel lobby and the splendid seaside terrace beyond it. The rooms are furnished in antique style. The rooms include an outdoor pool surrounded by a patio and steps leading down to the hotel beach – inside, you’ll find a sauna and pool. – Hotel Mozart

7. **Monokini**
   Opatija’s leading (only?) contemporary bar attracts a younger, more bohemian crowd. Friendly staff give enthusiastic service, even though things can get hectic later on. The bar, on the main road through the heart of town, comes with funky decor with retro overtones from the 1960s. Monokini also accommodates regularly changing exhibitions by Croatian artists. CDs range from techno to rock. – Monokini Tiv 95 (051 718 444, facebook.com/monokini.opatija).

8. **Remisens Premium Hotel Kvarner**
   Completely revamped by the Remisens group, Croatia’s first luxury hotel on the Adriatic, the Kvarner, right on the promenade, is an imposing imperial presence in the heart of Opatija. Fans of grandeur will love the majestic size of the Crystal Ballroom, the ornate hotel lobby and the splendid seaside terrace beyond it. The rooms are furnished in antique style. The rooms include an outdoor pool surrounded by a patio and steps leading down to the hotel beach – inside, you’ll find a sauna and pool. – Hotel Kvarner

9. **Hotel Navis**
   Set on a cliff overlooking the sea, Navis is a white-stonehill for a Bond villain. An unusual example of Adriatic modernism, the recently constructed Navis features its own private beach, an outdoor pool and an upscale restaurant that merits visiting even if you’re staying elsewhere. The ultra-stylish Navis has a curving hallways decked in Pollock-esque swirls. The design theme isn’t continued in the rooms, which are decorated with contemporary furnishings and tasteful artwork. All of its 40 rooms all have private balconies with sea views. Luxury on this level isquantity expensive, but you may not find a better boutique hotel in Opatija. – Hotel Navis

10. **Hotel Miramar**
    Part of the newly rebranded Amandria Park Hotel Milenij, this hotel offers a private fenced-in beach. Stylish, comfortable and expanded to include three guest villas, creating a full-service resort hotel with its own rocky beach. Stylish, comfortable and air-conditioned rooms have their own balcony or terrace. There’s a spa with a heated pool, whirlpool, saunas, steam room and beauty treatments. Cross the footbridge from the Lungomare for the open sea on the other. – Hotel Miramar
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