



Travel Stories by Amaru & Suzanne



Dubrovnik, the Pearl of the Adriatic

by Amaru & Suzanne, Sept 9th 2007

To get to Croatia we had to catch a ferry to Dubrovnik from Bari.

We arrived in Bari around 8pm and had no real clue on where to move on from here. Luckily, we managed to spot a few other people walking around the train station with backpacks that looked just as lost as we were.

We were not quite lost though, we knew that the dock was about 2km north, but at night you don't want to be lugging that much luggage. We checked with taxi drivers and they wanted 50€ to take us to the dock....yeah, right!

So, Suz and I and three French-Canadians, Sylvain, Carl and Karine, managed to find a bus to take us to the dock. Here we managed to find out where to pick up our tickets and then we had about 3 hours to wait before we could board the boat.



The French-Canadians we ran into
Sitting aboard the ferry to Croatia



Carl, Trina and Alex
Getting to know each other onboard

Sylvain had to sneak away to get some money out and the rest of us stayed chatting about this and that in the meantime (you know the normal backpacker talk, where have you been, where are you going etc....).

When he came back he had three girls in tow, a Canadian one, Trina and two British ones, Alex and Laura. We were all introduced to each other and then took off to find a bit of food before we got on the boat.

We managed to find a pizzeria that was open and ordered a few pizzas to share... while we stood there waiting for the pizzas quite a few Marilyn Manson wannabees passed us on their way some sort of concert....not the people you want to run into in a dark alley =)

Eventually we made it on to the ferry and sat talking for a while, deciding where to stay in Dubrovnik, what to do during our two days there and where to go afterwards.

Suz and I had a cabin to ourselves so we eventually sneaked away to get a few hours of sleep. Some of the others had to find carpet space on the boat, and Sylvain had his trusty hammock that caused a few looks by fellow passengers. The next morning we arrived in Croatia and it was now time to find accommodations. We had not booked ahead but that is not really a problem on the islands of Croatia. You will always find dozens of people offering their houses and apartments to you.

Suz and I together with Sylvain, Carl and Karine got off the ferry first and were approached with all kinds of offers. We told them that we were still waiting for three more people and they backed off.



Suz and I
aboard the ferry



**Sylvain
and his hammock!**

Eventually the three other girls appeared, they had overslept....

We now went with one of the guys offering rooms, all of us except Carl and Karine (who already had accommodation booked) wanted to stay in the same place if possible. This guys said he had enough rooms so Sylvain, Alex and I decided to follow him and see what he was offering.

The place was perfect, nice rooms and a great terrace for us to sit in.... We told him that we would take him up on his offer and he then made another 2 car trips to the harbour to pick up the rest of us.

When we were all together he offered us all mineral water, coffee and some grapes growing from his own terrace.... A very nice host!

If you see this guy offering you a room in Dubrovnik....take him up on his offer, the price is good and the location is not too bad either, just about 5-10min walk from the old town...

We were all sitting in the terrace and having some coffee and our host, Drago, was telling us that two of our rooms were ready but the last one we had to wait until the person occupying it left. He kept saying that "Mr Daniele" would check out soon.

Around 5min later this guy walks up, clearly hangover and just mumbles a hello to us before he addresses Drago, telling him that he will leave in 15min. Drago then says "no problem Mr Daniele, It's ok". After that Drago leaves to make the beds in the room and we just ask this guy if his name is Daniele. He just responds with: "No, it's Leo..."



**We are onboard the Marko Polo
which took us from Bari to Dubrovnik**



**We have arrived
in Croatia!**

How he managed to get the name "Mr Daniele" we don't know but it sure was a lot of fun and from his moment we kept referring to Drago as "Mr Daniele".

After a very nice start to our day we decided that it was time to check out the Old Town of Dubrovnik. During our walk down to the city walls of town we managed to see the waters of Croatia for the first time, and it sure was beautiful. The waters are so clear, the colors are so wonderful, we couldn't wait to get into the water.... but that would had to wait, today was city exploration day!

We managed to see the city walls of the old town at a distance and we could also see the bus loads of tourists from here.

The old town of Dubrovnik is jam packed with tourists in summer, we chose to visit in September just to avoid the crowds, but there is no way to avoid them all....

Ah well, we just had to make the best of it. Our first stop was to get something for brunch and Alex had the perfect idea. She had been to Croatia before and suggested that we try a local dish called "Burek". This is just a heavy pastry filled with either cheese, meat or something sweet. We tried the cheese and the meat ones and they were great.

After our nice lunch we walked down to the harbour and followed the city walls on the outside until the point of no return....well, or until we couldn't walk along the wall anymore, so we had to re-trace our steps to make it back into the old town again.



**Drago, "Mr Daniele"
Our Dubrovnik landlord!**



Suz and Alex
Inspecting the coffee cup

The time had now turned "beer o'clock" so Sylvain and I started to look for a nice place where we could all sit and have some nice cold drinks.... and here we got our first shock! We had heard that Croatia was supposed to be quite cheap, but these beers were around AUD\$ 8 and that's not cheap at all!!

Maybe it was just the old town of Dubrovnik that was this expensive we thought.... and to some extent that was correct. That night we all went to a supermarket and shopped for food, beers and wine - enough to serve 6 people, and it only came down to around AUD\$ 5 per person.

So we started wondering, can any of the local people afford anything in Dubrovnik old town at all? Is it all just a big setup for the tourists?

And don't get us wrong.... it's a beautiful city with its city wall and marble floors. But it's just too pricy for us!

So, the next day we decided to get away from Dubrovnik and made a day trip to one of the nearby islands, Lopud!

The ferry was quite cheap and it didn't take us longer than 40min to get to where we wanted to go. And our first impression of the island was that it's beautiful, just as the boat takes you into the harbour you first notice the old church hovering over the small village. Then when the boat anchors to the dock you look down into the water and you're able to see all the way to the bottom of the ocean. We have never been in water with such clarity, it's amazing!



On our way to the
Old Town of Dubrovnik



The waters here in Croatia
are crystal clear!

Just as we were getting off the ferry we managed to spot Carl and Karine. They had decided to do a day trip to this island on the very same day as we had.... it's funny how this all turns out!

All of us walked the 15-20min needed to reach the other side of the island and the beach that it's famous for.... we read in our guidebook that this is supposed to be one of the best sand beaches in Croatia (most beaches around here are very rocky and pebbly).

And yeah, we couldn't complain at all, it really was a beautiful beach and a most of us hurried to get into the waters. And it was cold, very cold.... First of all this was in September and secondly the last few days had been quite rainy.

It was hard but we made it and after a while when your body numbs out you are fine in the water =)

I had my underwater camera casing with me and we played around with it quite a bit, taking photos of people under water while swimming or of us guys while we were drinking our beers (we figured that the water was the best place to keep the beer cold....and we were right).

Since we had brought a picnic for lunch we settled down and had some food at midday, normally we would have expected some flies around the food but not here, we had wasps.... even though we didn't really have anything sweet, how bizarre and annoying!!

We did manage to eat our lunch without any stings though...



On our way into
Old Town



**The main street
of Dubrovnik**

After a few hours on the beach it was time to go back and catch the ferry back to Dubrovnik. We were waiting at the pier when the boat arrived, Suz said that she was going to wait for the two British girls, Alex and Laura, so I gave her the tickets and got onboard.

2 min later the boat was leaving the port with Suz still on the dock..... Suz, Alex and Laura tried to get on but they just ignored them and the boat took off. I managed to talk to one of the crew members and he told me that they were just going to another island nearby and were then coming back for the rest of the people on the dock.

And sure enough, 10min later the girls made it onto the boat and we all had a good laugh about it!

During our last evening in Dubrovnik we all got together (yes, all 8 of us) and cooked a big dinner together and spent a good few hours just chatting away before we all left for the comforts of our beds.

Dubrovnik was really beautiful, it's very expensive and a bit too touristic unfortunately, but we liked it nonetheless. The island of Lopud was amazing as well, a nice sandy beach with some gorgeous waters to swim in.

So far Croatia has been so much more fun to travel in than for example Italy, sure there are a lot of us now but it's also the fact that people here are so friendly and really try to make you feel at home.

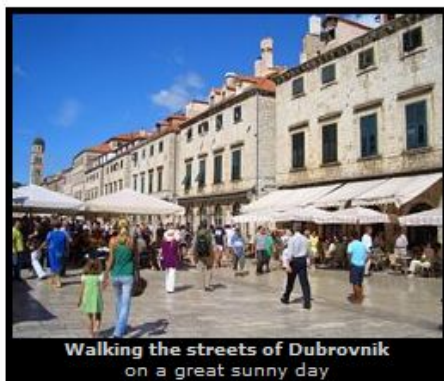
We are loving it so far and could not wait to get to our next destination, the island of Korcula!



**Laura, Suz, Alex, Trina and Sylvain
...pondering their options?**



**The streets are all made of marble
Beautiful and slippery at the same time**



**Walking the streets of Dubrovnik
on a great sunny day**



**Burek
Some typical Croatian snacks**



**We found a small place
to sit down and have our Bureks**



**Along the old harbour
of Dubrovnik**



**Looking back at Dubrovnik harbour
and its city walls**



**Alex taking a nap
using her Croatia book as cover!**



**I had to feel the water
...it was cold!**



**Sitting down and having
some of the local beers**



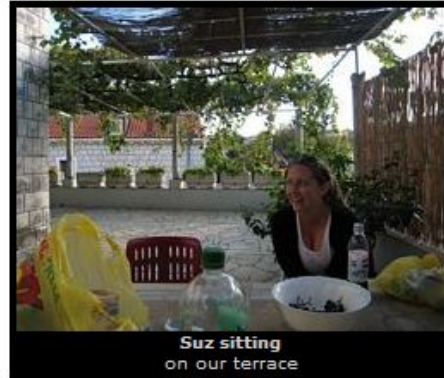
**Laura and Alex
Two crazy British girls**



**At the supermarket
Yes, we are quite crazy as well!!**



Cooking for 6 people requires quite a bit of food!



Suz sitting on our terrace



The girls are getting us some fresh tomatoes for lunch



Back on another boat This time we're going to Lopud



Beer o'clock well, at least for Sylvain and I



The main church on the island of Lopud



Looking down into the clear waters of the harbour



Suz and I walking along the shore



We managed to run into
Carl and Karine whom we met on the ferry



We're on our way to the famous
beach on the island



We had to walk all
over the island to get there though



It has a very nice sandy beach
Supposed to be one of the best in Croatia



Sylvain and Carl
Showing us how clear the water is



Alex
is trying synchronized swimming



The few of us who braved the cold
are just playing around in the water



Sylvain and Carl
at the beach bar



The Three Musketeers
Enjoying our beers!



It's lunch time
Good thing we brought a picnic



Such a nice beach
to snooze on



And the girls are really
appreciating it!



The island of Lopud
is really beautiful



Carl, Karine and Suz
are enjoying their gelatos



Sitting down and waiting
for our boat back to Dubrovnik



The five of us on the boat
Suz, Laura and Alex are still on the pier



Leaving the island
and going back to main land



We finished our last night in Dubrovnik
having a nice dinner together

[Back to Top](#)