

Ultimate Kid-Friendly Itinerary for Spending 1, 2, 3, 4 days in Zagreb

Why The 2 Idiots recommend exploring Zagreb?

When people think of visiting a Croatian city, they often think of picturesque Dubrovnik, where “Game of Thrones” was filmed. We decided to visit the capital city of Zagreb instead, and it is such a cool, energetic city that we would go back in a heartbeat. Although the country is old, its democracy is young, and the people of Zagreb have such an excited and hopeful energy – you can feel it as you walk around. It reminds of our hometown of Charlotte because it’s filled with new businesses, restaurants and growth. It’s also very family-friendly and children are everywhere.

CREATING AN IDEAL ITINERARY

We stayed for four days in Zagreb because our trip was a marathon, not a sprint. However, we think you can do this trip in three days, spending two in the city and a day trip outside of the city. If you only have two days, use it to visit the city.

Logistics

Stay in the center of town. Our Airbnb was one of the best we had on our entire 9-month trip and was right off Ilica street (Donji Grad). It is in the heart of downtown and as soon as we walked out we could feel the city’s energy. It was surrounded by markers and shops, as well a big mall. The owner welcomed us with a sign and had a stocked minibar we could use and leave a little extra money.

Vacation days	Itinerary	Estimated cost per person (only attractions)
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Day 1	<p>Walking tour of Zagreb</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ban Jelacic Square • St. Marks Church • Stone Gate • Zagreb Cathedral • Kravi Most (Bloody Bridge) <p>Spend evening in Tkalciceva</p>	Included with your tour
Day 2	<p>Spend your day in the Upper Town (Gorjni Grad)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take the funicular on the way up (from Tomic Street) • Lotrscak Tower • Park Gric • Capture great views of the city <p>Visit fascinating museums:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Museum of Broken Relationships • Croatian Museum of Naïve Art <p>Watch the sunset and grab drinks at Zagreb 360</p> <p>Spend the evening around Ilica street (Donji Grad)</p>	89 Kuna for the day's attractions
Day 3	<p>Visit Dolac Market in the morning</p> <p>Zrinjevac park and walk to the train station</p> <p>Spending another evening in Tkalciceva</p>	
Day 4	<p>Take a day trip outside of Zagreb:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postojna caves and Ljubljana, Slovenia • Varazdin 	37.90 Euro

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plitvice Lakes National Park 	55 to 180 Kuna (depending on season)

Day 1: Explore Historical Zagreb

As we often recommend when visiting a new city, taking a walking tour is a great introduction to a city to learn your way around and uncover the history of a place. We took a 2.5-hour [free walking tour](#) that was exhausting but a great tour. We started in the main square, Ban Jelacic (pronounced ban yel-a-tich). It was a good start because the pedestrian square was filled with pigeons and Aarav loves chasing after pigeons. As we continued up to Upper Town, there is a funicular but we took the steps because it was part of the tour route. It meant having to carry the stroller and Aarav, but if your children can climb the steps, it can help exhaust them for a nap in their stroller as you walk around.

At the top is Lotrscak (pronounced lok-ra-stock Tower and you'll take in beautiful views of the city. There is a cannon, the Gric cannon, they shoot off every day at noon, which we missed watching because we took an afternoon tour. The legend is during the Turks invasion, the cannon was shot at noon, landing in the Pasha's lunch at the Turks encampment. The Pasha thought the Croats had sharpshooters and decided not to invade Zagreb. The cannon has been fired every day at noon ever since.

From here, we walked to St. Mark's Church near the parliament. The church is adorable. On the red and white tiled roof that is definitely going to have to make it to a couple of your Instagram posts are two very large coat of arms. One is the coat of arms for Zagreb; the other for the Triune Kingdom of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia and both are very colorful and make the rooftop a work of art.

After the church, you will walk through the Stone Gate, passing through the city's most sacred site. Here, people leaves notes and prayers and you can light a candle and make your own prayers. Dating back to 1266, a painting of Virgin Mary on the wall became an oath site. The Croats believe if you light a candle in Stone Gate, the Virgin Mary will hear your prayers.

Next, you'll stop at the Zagreb Cathedral. The front of the cathedral is beautiful and completely redone, although the back and sides are not done yet due to finances. The Roman Catholic

church was built in 1217 but it was destroyed in 1242 by Mongols and rebuilt again in 1287. Fortification walls were put up around the church in the 15th century to protect it from the Ottoman Empire, and you can still see ruins of the walls as you walk around. The cathedral was nearly destroyed during an earthquake in 1880 and has slowly been undergoing restoration. Inside is a point of contention for the Croats. The chandeliers inside were donated by a Las Vegas casino that was being demolished. A Croatian businessman bought them and donated them to the church, and the church didn't have money and needed the lighting but people did not want the Catholic church outfitted with Vegas casino lights.

The tour completes at Krvavi (pronounced kr-va-vi) most, which means Bloody Bridge. Zagreb used to be divided by a creek, separating the citizens, the Gradec (pronounced grad-its) and Kaptol (pronounced cap-tol). Battles between the two were constant, thus the name Bloody Bridge. The creek was eventually filled in and covered with the street, which keeps its name as a reminder of the history here.

In the evening, visit Tkalciceva (pronounced t-kal-ch-va) Street. Over a mile in length, the pedestrian street is in the Gornji Grad (pronounced gor-ni-grad) – Medvescak (pronounced med-va-stock) district and is filled with restaurants. We were surprised by the diversity of the restaurants which we sometimes don't find in smaller countries. Here, they are run from people from other countries and we had our first taste of Sri Lanka food here and it was amazing. The street has so much energy that it still makes us smile thinking the fun we had here.

Day 2: Visit Upper Town and Museums

On your second day, enjoy a leisurely morning and breakfast, then return to the funicular and take a ride to the top -- much better than walking it the day before! It's an easy and short ride, and is accessible via Tomiceva street, just a few minutes from Ban Jelacic, and you can get yourself back up to Upper Town to explore what you missed on day one. Be sure to make it by noon to watch the firing of the cannon.

We discovered a park all the way at the end and although we saw teens hanging around like it was the cool make-out spot, it affords great views of the city and you can take lots of great photos.

This easy day is your chance to enjoy the city's super unique museums, including one of the coolest museums we have seen, the Museum of Broken Relationships. Showcasing personal stories of people who have lost others, be it significant others, parents or siblings, you can see stories of heartbreak through letters, cassette tapes, and other exhibits. It may sound odd, but everyone has experienced a broken relationship, and you can see funny stories, sad stories and just connect through emotions.

Next, visit the Museum of Naïve Art, which is truly cool because you are seeing art by regular people, not people who dedicate their lives to be artists. These are regular people like us who want to express their creativity and paint, draw and sculpt and the artwork is very interesting.

Some of the artists have even become famous as naïve artists, and are highly regarded in Croatia.

Once you have spent your day exploring the museums, go back down the funicular and grab a drink at Zagreb 360. The drinks aren't anything special but you'll get 360-degree views of Zagreb. It's the perfect place to take in a sunset, and for us, we were lucky; Aarav had fallen asleep before we visited so we snuck in a little date.

Day 3: Enjoy the Food and Markets of Zagreb

If you have four days, as we had, make your third day a relaxing shopping day. In the morning visit the Dolac (pronounced do-lach) Market, which are really wonderful because they are bustling with locals and give you a sense of life in the city. Stroll through the markets and then grab lunch in the area -- try a Struki, a Croatian national dish. (See more about dining in our tips, below.)

In the afternoon, visit Zrinjevac (pronounced zin-er-ich) park, officially called Nikola Subic Zrinski (pronounced ni-kol show-vich z-rin-ski) Square, which was the first park in Lower Town. It's one of the largest parks in the city and its perfect for kids, who can run and play and enjoy the park's water fountains and playgrounds. The park is 135,000 square feet, and you can follow a path all the way to the train station, where there are shops and bars to grab a drink and snack before making your way back.

In the evening, return to Tkalciceva Street for another fantastic dinner in the bustling nightlife of city.

Day 4: Day Trip in Croatia and Slovenia

On your third or fourth day in Zagreb, take a trip outside of the city and explore the nearby sites. There is so much to see in the area. You could take a day trip to Slovenia and visit the Postojna Caves (pronounced post-troy-na), which is so awe-inspiring we can only describe it as Gringotts from the Harry Potter books and movies. (Read our blog on visiting the [Postojna Caves](#).)

If you visit the caves, you will be so close to Slovenia's capital city of Ljubljana (pronounced yo-be-ana), so a visit would give you a chance to compare the nation's cities. Ljubljana dates back to the 12th century and has been a thriving, energetic city since Slovenia was declared independent in 1991.

Back in Croatia, another city to explore is Varazdin (pronounced var-raz-din), filled with baroque buildings also dating back to the 1100s. We visited Varazdin when we drove to Budapest, which you can see in our blog.

Croatia's largest national park, Plitvice, is also a wonderful day trip. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the park, found along the Adriatic coastline, is filled with waterfalls and mountains and is a

spectacular site. So many people want to visit the park during summer months, they actually limit how many tickets are sold to keep it from getting too crowded and giving visitors a chance to enjoy the park's peaceful areas.

You won't go wrong picking any of these sites to visit, and renting a car and driving is very easy in both Croatia and Slovenia.

KID-FRIENDLY TIPS

- Take your stroller - there is a lot of walking in Zagreb. Try our recommendations for a [good stroller](#), which is lightweight and can fit into a bag so you can carry it easily.
- There are many squares, parks and car-free areas for the kids to run around in Zagreb.
- Get up to Gorjani Grad using the Funicular for a fun ride. We also took the stairs up for our walking tour and it was super exhausting with Aarav.

OTHER TIPS

- In Upper Town, make sure you go to and hear the cannon fire. It is fired every day at noon.
- While Croatia is in the EU, they don't use the Euro yet. They have their own currency called Kuna. Make sure you exchange your currency when you come into Zagreb.
- You get to try foods from all around the world in Zagreb especially on Tkalčiceva. Here are some amazing restaurants we tried:
 - **Sri Lankan Curry Bowl.** We tried Sri Lankan food, yes, for the first time in Zagreb. This is on Tkalčiceva.
 - **La Struk.** Sample the popular Croatian dish called Zagorski strukli (pronounced stru-kli). Locals will tell you to skip the plain version and have one with spieces. We had a savory and a sweet one and they both were delicious. This is right by Tkalčiceva.
 - **Agava.** For high-end Croatian food and a great date spot (even with your children). This is also on Tkalčiceva.
 - **Mundoaka Street Food.** Located near Ilica street and 360 Zagreb is an amazing place that has street foods from different places around the world.
 - Eat the hot corn off the street – it was spicy and delicious.