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Croatia gives groups a taste of Eastern European cuisine

by Jeff Heilman



Faithfully preserving culinary traditions that date back centuries, Croatia affirms that old axiom that “the history of the world is found on the plate.” With regional favorites such as Dalmatian prosciutto, salt-pickled sardines and all kinds of pastries, cakes and strudels, Croatia’s diverse menu also includes robust red and refreshing white wines, flavored *rakijas* (brandies) and vodka.

Along with myriad dining options and culinary and winery tours, groups can discover the tastes of Croatia at these three epicurean experiences.

Croatia is prized for the black and white truffles found chiefly on the Istrian peninsula. Along with guided truffle tours and hunts, groups can savor meals

prepared with this fragrant fungus at Restaurant Zigante in Livade, the dining offshoot of Zigante Tartufi, Croatia’s leading truffle exporter. Assisted by his dog, owner Giancarlo Zigante is in the *Guinness Book of World Records* for finding the largest truffle ever recorded in 1999.

Known as the “Pearl of the Adriatic” for its timeless charm, enchanting Dubrovnik is also celebrated for its seafood—including the delicious oysters served all over town. A chief source for these “pearls of the ocean” is the fortified 14th century town of Ston, where groups can help harvest and then enjoy oysters in nearby Mali Ston bay.

Olives and olive oil have sustained Croatians for centuries. In December 2013, Golden Olive Oil, from Zagreb-based Kreativni Laboratorij, was named “Best Exclusive Product” at the Harrods Food Supplier Conference in London. With factories and vineyards in the Split region and elsewhere offering tours and tastings, group can tap directly into this lifeblood staple.

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