

MultiCulti

Destination – Zagreb

by Dorothy Hayden



Earlier this year I was in Zagreb, and, in view of the forthcoming IT STAR Conference there in November 2010, I thought a brief account with my impressions might be of interest to the IT STAR Newsletter readership.

The main tourist attraction in Croatia is its fantastic Adriatic coastline – Istria, Kvarner and Dalmatia, dotted by numerous islands – but Zagreb also has much to offer to the business and the pleasure traveler and the city's importance as a travel destination will increase with Croatia's accession to the EU.

The earliest record of the name Zagreb dates back to 1094 with the foundation of a diocese by the Hungarian King Ladislaus. Today, with a population of over 800,000 the capital of Croatia is the largest city and the country's political, economic and cultural center. It is well connected by road, rail, air and water – the Sava is an international waterway. It is home to more than a third of Croatia's workforce and has the highest nominal GDP per capita in the country. Zagreb consists of Gornji (Upper) Grad with a concentration of historical and cultural monuments, churches, restaurants and theaters, and Dolni (Lower) Grad, which includes the shopping area, parks, and museums.

Among the city's main attractions are the Cathedral of the Assumption with its twin spires (see *photo above*), St. Mark's Church with Croatia's coat of arms and checkered design of the roof, the Jelacic Central Square and pedestrian zone and the nearby Mt. Medvednica and lake Jarun. The Croatian National Theater was built in 1895 and opened by emperor Franz Joseph I of Austria. The University of Zagreb was founded in 1669 and is one of the largest and oldest in Southeast Europe. There are numerous museums and art collections such as the Mimara Museum located in a late 19th century neo-Renaissance palace, the Archaeological Museum, the Croatian Natural History Museum and the Museum of Technology.

My short visit just before Easter coincided with a spell of rainy weather and yet the impressions that I carried away were of a lovely city with a Central European character. My hotel was on the main shopping street named Ilica and my sightseeing included the marketplace close to the Cathedral of the Assumption, which was certainly a pleasant experience of color, sound and aroma. The cathedral itself is a landmark and temple of worship at all times to many

devout believers. Enormous Easter eggs, decorated by leading Croatian painters, were placed at the Jelacic Square and in front of St. Mark's Church, which is surrounded by an architectural complex of government and state buildings.



St. Mark's Church



Cable Car to Gornji Grad

A highlight of my visit was the dinner invitation of the President of the Croatian Information Technology Society at "Bistro Apetit", Jurjevska St. 65a. The restaurant is located in the Upper Town's green residential area. Wining and dining there would satisfy even the most demanding connoisseurs. It is run by an Austrian "4 toques" chef (and owner) with a wide international experience in the catering business, and is the choice of many local and international celebrities.

As we drove there, our Croatian companions referred to this area as the Zagreb Grinzing. Indeed, the scenery, villas, parks and atmosphere leave most pleasant memories.

Detailed information on Zagreb and its surroundings is available at <http://www.zagreb-touristinfo.hr/?l=e>