



## Island-Hopping in Croatia (Affordably)

By Victoria Mather

Dear Victoria,

I keep hearing about “new Rivas.” Where are they?

Fleur,  
Paris, France

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Dear Fleur,

F. Scott Fitzgerald, having helped popularize the original French Riviera, should be living at this hour. If he were, he and Zelda and Gerald and Sara Murphy would undoubtedly set up camp in Croatia: hundreds of islands and miles of cove-pocked coast on the gin-clear Adriatic sea. In addition to the swimming, a main draw is the little, family-run restaurants where lobster, amberjack, bream, and shrimp jump straight onto your plate from the fisherman’s boat via the fire of a wood-burning oven.



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A bird’s-eye view of Dubrovnik and Lokrum island, in Croatia.

In recent years, Croatia and the tiny, mountainous country to its south, Montenegro, have emerged as the glamour pussies of Eastern Europe, tucked up a finger of the Mediterranean opposite Italy. This is where you should be this summer, lolling on a yacht. The dream boat would be *Beluga*, owned by Lady Weinberg (the interior designer Anouska Hempel who gave us the hip, black-themed hotel, Blakes, in London). A 28-meter Turkish gullet with black sails, butler, antique linen swathing beds in three cabins, a private PADI diving instructor, and staff from Blakes to administer black-squid risotto to 18 for dinner, it has everything you need to momentarily believe that there’s no recession in paradise. Sail to Vis, the island with the most magical natural harbor, where Tito ran his resistance movement during the war from a cave, and then set off for Hvar, a lavender-scented isle where the streets were paved by the Venetians. Dine a couple of miles offshore at Zori (*zori.hr*), a family-run restaurant on the car-free island of Palmizana. It’s like the South of France in the old Princess Grace days: white linen tablecloths, flowers, stuffed calamari and figs and almonds in lavender syrup.

Love the idea? You’ll first need to secure a boat. If *Beluga* (€45,000, or around \$59,000, per week) is the dream, Michael Bird at Dalmatian Destinations ([dalmatiandestinations.com](http://dalmatiandestinations.com)) also offers a nice dose of reality: M.S. *Andeo*, which accommodates eight people at €2,200 (\$2,900) per person per week, all inclusive (including drinks), and M.S. *Malena*, available for eight people at €1,600 (\$2,100) per person per week, also all inclusive. Both boats are staffed with a crew, and Bird provides complimentary transfers to and from the airport in proper air-conditioned Mercedes.

Montenegro, another former Yugoslav country with a gorgeously craggy Adriatic coastline, is still determining its touristic identity—being “discovered” right now by both backpackers and oligarchs—but it’s already been consecrated with an Aman resort. Situated near the Communist-era beachside attractions of Budva, the immaculate Aman Sveti Stefan ([amanresorts.com](http://amanresorts.com)) comprises an entire medieval fishing village (which comprises the

entire islet of Sveti Stefan) as well as the Villa Milocer, once the summer residence of Queen Marija Karadordevic, on the mainland. The villa is open year-round. The island opens for the season today.

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Dear Victoria,

*I've done villas in Tuscany and Greece. I'm thinking next about Turkey, but I'd want a really cool house. Do you have any suggestions for rentals?*

*Carlotta  
Seville, Spain*

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You're on the money. There weren't cool houses in Turkey until Victoria Hooberman and Maymie White came along. Their company, Scott Williams ([scottwilliams.co.uk](http://scottwilliams.co.uk)), is picky-picky. They inspect every property, down to the sheets and soap. If you want cool, I'd suggest James House (€4,800, or around \$6,300, per week) in the coastal town of Türkbükü on the Bodrum Peninsula, a party pad that sleeps 12 with a garden through the center of the house, an open-plan kitchen, and a lovely pool.

***Have a travel question for Victoria? Send queries, along with your name, address, and daytime phone number, to [askvictoria@vf.com](mailto:askvictoria@vf.com).*** NOTE: Vanity Fair reserves the right to edit submissions, which may be published or otherwise used in any medium. All submissions become the property of Vanity Fair.

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