

Croatia at a glance:

Location: Southeastern Europe, bordering the Adriatic Sea, between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia

Climate: Continental climate, hot summers and cold winters.
Coastal climate, dry summers and mild winters

Area: 56,542 sq km (slightly smaller than West Virginia)

Population: 4,284,889 (2011 Census)

Ethnic groups:	Croatian	90.4%
	Serbian	4.4%
	Other	5.2%

Literacy: 98.1%

Official language: Croatian (Many people speak/understand some English)

Capital: Zagreb Government type: Presidential/Parliamentary democracy

National holiday: Independence Day – June 25 (from Yugoslavia in 1991)

Economy: Income per capita \$14,457.00 (USD)

Unemployment: 19%

Employment:	Agriculture – 5%
	Industry – 31.3%
	Services – 63.6%

Religions:	Roman Catholic – 87.8%
	Orthodox – 4.4%
	Muslim – 1.3%
	Other Christian – 0.4%
	Unspecified – 0.9%
	None – 5.2%

Communication: Land lines – 1.825 million users

Cell phones – 5.035 million users
Internet – 1.995 million users

Currency: Kuna (HRK)

Currency exchange Rate: \$1.00 (USD) = 5.55(HRK) (February 22, 2014)

Time Zone: Croatia is 7 hours later than Houston, Tx

Passport: You will need to keep your passport with you at all times. If you have not done so, please make a copy of your passport and give the copy to Shannon. Leave a copy at home as well in case you lose your passport. You will register with the police department upon arrival in Sisak. You must carry this document with you as well.

Practical Help:

American dollars cannot be used to make purchases in Croatia. Exchanging dollars to Croatia Kuna is required for making purchases. There are several banks in Sisak that can accommodate currency exchanges but plan ahead. Bank hours fluctuate as do currency exchange rates. Sometimes, other methods of payment are accepted such as Visa or Master Card.

Traveler's checks are not recommended. Merchants and some banks do not accept them. The exchange rate is bad and some fees to cash them may be high.

ATM machines are available in Sisak. Be sure to bring the PIN number. If using a credit card, call your credit card company in advance and let them know you will be traveling to Europe and that you will be using your credit card there. Funds may not be available if you do not make arrangements prior to traveling.

Discover card and personal checks are **NOT** accepted in Europe.

You will want to make sure you keep some Kuna with you to buy ice cream, soda, water, or coffee that you might want while walking through town. Most of these items cost between 5 and 10 kuna each.

Electrical current:

European electrical current is 220v/50Hz, unlike US electrical current at 110v/60Hz.

All appliances designed for 220v, like a computer, can be used in Croatia but an adapter for the plug socket is required. This usually comes with a conversion kit.

Smaller appliances such as hair dryers, electric shavers, etc. may need to have a voltage adapter to work properly. These are inexpensive and can be purchased at Wal Mart.

Reminders:

Remember to bring all prescription medications with you on your carry-on. Prescriptions should be in labeled, pharmacy bottle.

We will be doing a lot of walking. Please bring appropriate shoes.

Croatia is 6 hours ahead of New York, 7 hours ahead of Texas, 8 hours ahead of Colorado and 9 hours ahead of California. Daylight savings time is not observed.

The metric system is used for measurements as is Celsius for temperature.

Communication to home:

If you are staying in town at Janko's house, internet is available during non-working hours. Janko works from home so we need to respect his time.

Some cell phones have an international plan but you should check on that prior to traveling. Make sure you understand all fees before using this method to call home.

If you would like to send post cards or mail home, it usually takes 7 – 10 days. There is a post office in Sisak. Postage can be purchased there. There are several places that you can purchase post cards. Plan ahead, you may get home before your post card does.

Shopping:

There are many shops in Sisak. On Saturdays, there is an open air market in Sisak. It is worth going to see and shop. There is a large “Wal Mart” type store called Inter Spar that sells just about anything you might need.

Emergency contacts:

Janko Putric
probus@probus.hr

Svjetlana Birac
svjetlana.ancic-birac@sk.htnet.hr

Use these email addresses if someone from home needs to get a message to you. Communication to home may not always be available.

What to wear:

Men: You will want to bring clothes for all weather. Make sure to bring a light jacket or sweatshirt. Jeans or long shorts are acceptable. Shorts should be knee length. T-shirts with sleeves are acceptable. Jeans or casual slacks and a polo type shirt are acceptable for church. Work clothes for construction.

Women: You will also want to bring clothes for all weather. Bring a light jacket or sweatshirt. Jeans or long shorts are acceptable. Shorts should be knee length. T-shirts with sleeves are acceptable. Jeans or a skirt and a nice shirt are acceptable for church.

*Try not to bring too many heavy clothes such as jeans as they are difficult to dry as there are no clothes dryers. If it is rainy the jeans will not dry.

You may not be able to wash your clothes so plan accordingly.

Remember to bring comfortable shoes suitable for walking.

If you have any questions about attire please feel free to ask.

Meals:

It is customary to eat a light breakfast, a big lunch, and a light dinner. Food will be provided to you, you should not have to buy any meals. If you have any special diet needs, those items can be purchased in Croatia.

The meal times may vary depending on where you are staying. Please be flexible with meal times.

Again, you may want to keep some Kuna on you to purchase ice cream, soda, or coffee. You will be responsible for these items.

Cultural advice:

It is proper to remove your shoes when entering someone's home. Especially if you have been to the baseball field as that dirt stains everything it touches. You may want to bring slippers or extra socks to walk around in.

Alcohol in moderation is acceptable in the Christian culture there. You may be offered an alcoholic drink; you may decline if you do not want it. (Watch out for the homemade clear stuff, it will kill you)

Our goal is to be flexible. We depend on God to provide the strength and we remain flexible. We write our plans in pencil and hand God the eraser. He is in control; we are there to follow His lead. The schedule will change. It is best to try to go with the flow and it will be less stress for you. Time is not as important to their culture as it is to ours. Remember, we are building bridges through our relationships.

If you don't understand something, please don't hesitate to ask. It will not be offensive to anyone.