

# MEDITERRANEAN

SIGGY AND HEATHER | TRIP AROUND THE MEDITERRANEAN | SUNDAY, 21 APRIL 2013

## Split to Dubrovnik

We visited Split in the morning and then spent the next 4 hours driving the slow road along the coast to Dubrovnik.

We expected Split to be busy. It was a Sunday. We arrived close to the centre and parked our van. A seedy looking fellow came over and told us that parking was FREE today. He sat down and watched us. I walked up and down the car park and noticed that none of the cars had parking tickets on their dashboards. It must be that parking is indeed free on a Sunday. I nodded politely and said thank you to the kind gentleman. He must have thought that the Dutch are a bloody arrogant lot.

At the heart of Split is the Roman Emperor Diocletian's retirement palace. It was built between 295 and 305 AD. It is cited as one of the most impressive Roman monuments still fairly intact and is a UNESCO World Heritage site. We lost ourselves in the many narrow cobbled streets and went outside the walls through two of its four gates.

At one point we came across a farmers market where we purchased fresh fruit and vegetables plus a hat each to shield us



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Split Harbour with Split in the background

## Croatia's Coastal Road

The Croatian coast, hemmed in by Bosnia, spans over 500 kms. The high barren mountains slope steeply to the Adriatic. The narrow coastal strip has very little space for habitation or transport routes. High on the slopes we could see evidence of old terracing where people have obviously cultivated this barren landscape.

This land was never meant to grow anything. Even the trees and shrubs are stunted. Buildings, many quite dilapidated, hang on the side

of the hills. Views of the sea are breathtaking but parking for vehicles is at a premium.

For the majority of our drive, the land sloped sharply to the sea so that access to the water's edge was difficult. We drove for over 4 hours today along this winding coastline. The only change from the rocky landscape was when we entered an extremely wide river valley where the river flats were very intensively cultivated.



**WHAT'S COOKING?** Found this saucepan hanging next to a front door. Not sure if it was just being returned, used to whack husband when he returns drunk, OR simply used as an alternative to a door knocker.



**WOT THE?** This was the view ahead of us on the major highway. The road suddenly curved right around a barrier with this million dollar yacht just millimeters on the other side.



**DAPPER MAN** What better way to blend in with the locals than to wear a hat. Soon got asked in Croatian which way to the cathedral. My solution - shrug the shoulders.

## SNAPS



ROMEO AND JULIET BALCONY



ADRIATIC COAST



ADRIATIC COASTAL TOWN



FIRST GLIMPSE OF BOSNIA



BRIDGE IN TO DUBROVNIK

## No-one told us that we would be dropping in to see another country today.

from the sun. We also rode around the port area and enquired about ferries to Italy and Greece. We lunched in the van and drove off towards Dubrovnik along Croatia's narrow stretch of coastal land.

Croats may lay claim to many things but tidiness is not one of them. We realise that this country is still coming out of repressive times but there appears to be a lack of interest in tidying things up. It does not take any money to pack things away and pick up rubbish from front yards.

The landscape continued to be the same as yesterday with very little soil to be found but rock everywhere. Croatia is a land of contrasts. On one side we have seen the opulence while on the other hand we have also seen the poverty. People adorn themselves with gold and silver and very fashionable clothes and drive fancy cars yet we have also seen a subsistence level of existence by others. A number of cars we have seen are ancient.

But the thing that we can't understand is the untidiness. Messy, rocky landscapes and messy untidy buildings, fences, front gardens and roads.

### THE COASTAL ROAD TO DUBROVNIK WAS LONG AND WINDING BUT INTERESTING NEVERTHELESS

Croatia needs a general clean up and it might feel better about itself.

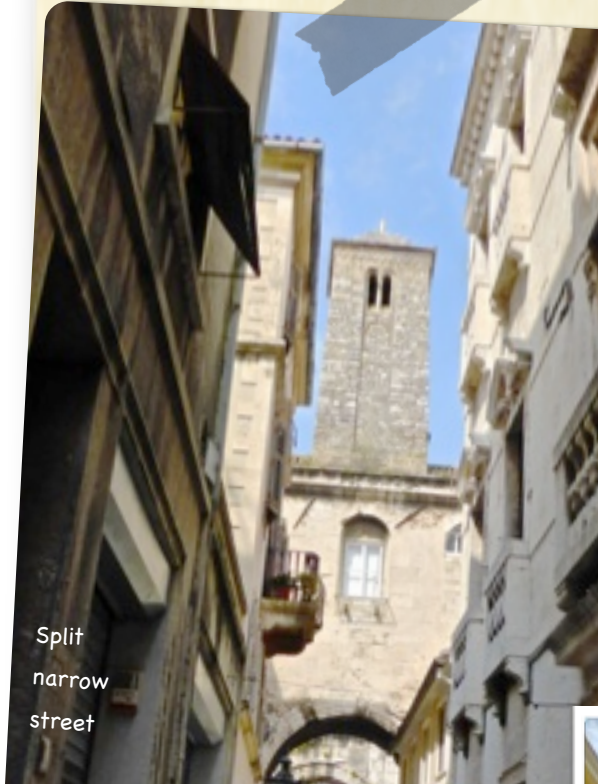
No-one had told us that we would be dropping in to see another country today. We thought that Dubrovnik was connected to the rest of Croatia via a sea bridge. Alas, we were driving along enjoying the blue of the ocean when hey-presto we were called upon by uniformed guards to halt. They gave our passports a cursory glance and ushered us into Bosnia Herzegovina!! We passed through about 20 km of it. It was quite clean and quite modern.

Soon we drove back into Croatia and ended up in the jewel of the Adriatic - Dubrovnik.

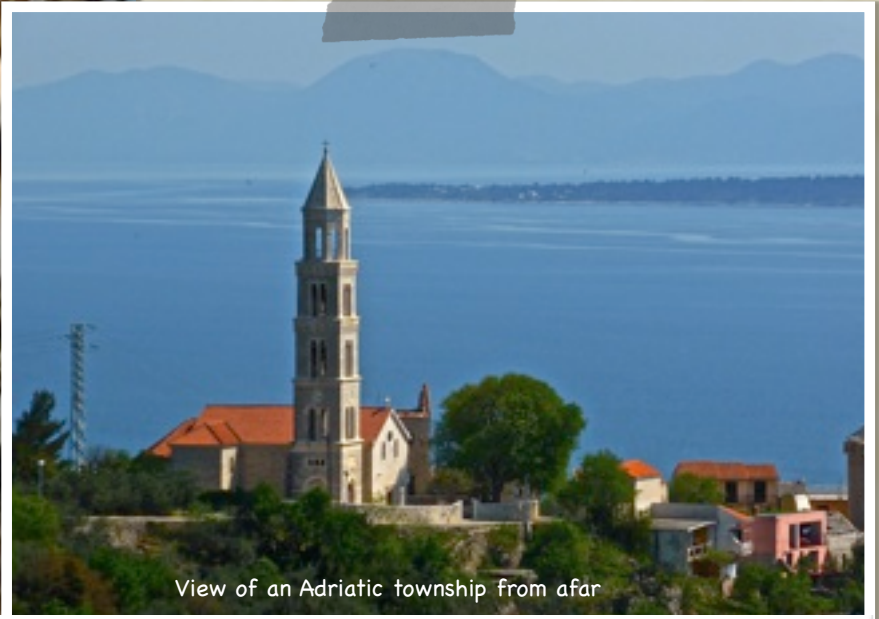
We aim to spend a few days here before we take a ferry to Bari in Italy and then another ferry to the north western coast of Greece. We made a conscious decision to go by ferry instead of choosing to drive the inland route through, what we consider to be, more risky, Balkan countries.



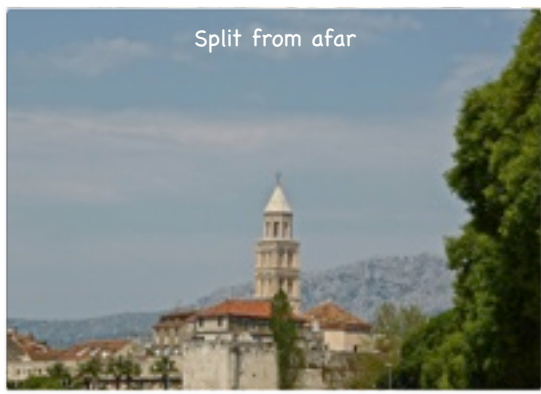
# PHOTOS



Split narrow street



View of an Adriatic township from afar



Split from afar



Split streetscape



Split roman restaurant (notice padded seating)