

CROATIA

2012



The Croatia trip was originally conceived by Neville and Masters. From the 6 teams that originally indicated their intentions to travel, only 1 team from Jhb and another from Clifton eventually made it. Below a photo of the Zoo Lake / Eds side – Calling themselves “Saffers at Sea”

From left to right:
Ryan Weaver
Haydn von Maltitz
Michael Baty
Karl Thanning
Jeremy Macdonald
Dave Macdonald
David Widdop
Kevin de Villiers
Tim Webb
Dave Prinsloo
Douglas Drysdale
Rowan Leibbrandt



2 itineraries were advertised.

The first saw people landing in Zagreb, from there travelling to Split via high speed train, and stopping over at the Plitvice lakes for the afternoon, before arriving at Split.

The second, saw people arriving in Split on the same day as itinerary 1.

The team chose Itinerary 2 – but here are photos of Plitvice which we missed out on.



Zagreb is a typically European City, with narrow roads, cobblestone passageways, castles, megalithic cathedrals, a plethora of history, and all of the first world modern conveniences, such as first class public transport (trams and busses), beautiful women, excellent bars, restaurants and night life. And it so happened that we arrived in the heart of the European Summer, so there were outdoor festivals and theatre, and beer tents and 40 degree heat. It was spectacular. Some photos...

Day 1 - Leave SA. Travel overnight SA to Zagreb. Taxi to hotel in the middle of town (called Hotel Dubrovnic - very nice, and extremely central). Walk around town, dinner, bed...

Day 2 - Do the touristy thing round Zagreb - Also, we tried to get into the local Waterpolo clubs training centre, to join in with their squad training (no luck). But the club pool complex comprised an indoor 50m pool, an outdoor 50m pool and a bathing pool, with restaurants, bars, nightclub and about 1500 people crammed into the outdoor pool during the day. At the outdoor pool there were about 6 sets (pairs) of goals lying around, and the photo below was taken just before 8pm.



Day 3 – Early start, back to airport, short flight to Split.

LESSON. Domestic flights do not allow the same weight for luggage as international flights – so always pack your luggage according to the domestic flights.

Once in Split, spend a few hours in the sea at hotel, then entire team bussed to the Old Town in Split, where we have a guided tour around the old town of Split. Thereafter, hosted by the local rugby club. Meet the Clifton boys. Play the local club in touch rugby. The rugby club put on a fantastic braai for us, including local beers. Local meat includes a local square sausage and chops. We meet the organiser of the polo tour, who presents us with some books on Croatian waterpolo and some flags and other mementos.



Day 4 – Spend most of the day in the sea at hotel. Some hired scooters and drove around town, or to nearby monasteries on the mountain slopes, and nearby castles. After lunch, bus to a small port other side of Split. Lunch on Boat. Swim in bay before disembarking. About 2 hours on boat, when island on our one side, gives way to a raiders of the lost ark type steep walled passageway, revealing the most beautiful village set deep within the cove. Puscisca. Phenomenal! As we enter the harbour we see the water polo pool ready for our game, floating in the harbour. We spend around 3 hours walking around the town. Game at 7. 4x games that evening. 2 for us, and 2 for Clifton. Opposition are probably best of entire trip (except last game in Split). Music blaring, townsfolk stop in to watch, floodlights. AWESOME. Followed by fish braai and beers and wine hosted by our opposition. We won both games! Lots of photos....





Day 5 – Leave Puscisca ☺ and head off to the Party Capital of the Croatian coast, Markaska. No beers again, game in Markaska later. Generally, the boat leaves around 9am, then sails 70% of the way, then moors in a secluded bay, where we all pile out and paddle, or snorkel, or play cards, or swim. Then, once the large ferries have left our destination for the day, we sail into the new port, arriving around 2 or 3pm. We are then given the freedom to walk the new city, before rendezvous-ing at the polo precinct at 7 for our game. Post the game we drink beer and eat food with our hosts, before walking what we have not already seen of the city again and having dinner (if required). Those that are without kids can then go jolling all night. Bars are open til 1am, at which time they close. Discos only open at 1am, and continue well beyond sunrise.



Day 6 – Leave Markaska, and with no polo that night, head to a nature reserve that is an island (Miljet) with an inland lake, that is phospholuminescent at night. Wow! We have the first of our fines meetings on deck that night. The Captain of the ship arranges a South African Braai on deck that night too.



Day 7 – Miljet to Dubrovnic. Dubrovnic is another beautiful city with a tremendous history. Second largest coastal city to Split, also has a fortified “Old City”. Is host to a summer waterpolo tournament that sees invitational sides put together for this exhibition tournament. Waterpolo again that evening. Where we had begun our tour playing as a team – this was the first game where individuals started playing themselves, and not the team. Think we lost this game.



Day 8 – Another rest day. Dubrovnic to Korcula. Korcula is the birth place of Marco Polo. While many history books teach us that Marco Polo was born in Venice, Italy, his true birth place was here in Croatia (which was once Communistic East Europe – hence the betrayal). However, once we got to Korcula, we learned that the Clifton team had found the local water polo club and had arranged a friendly game with them. So we played here too.



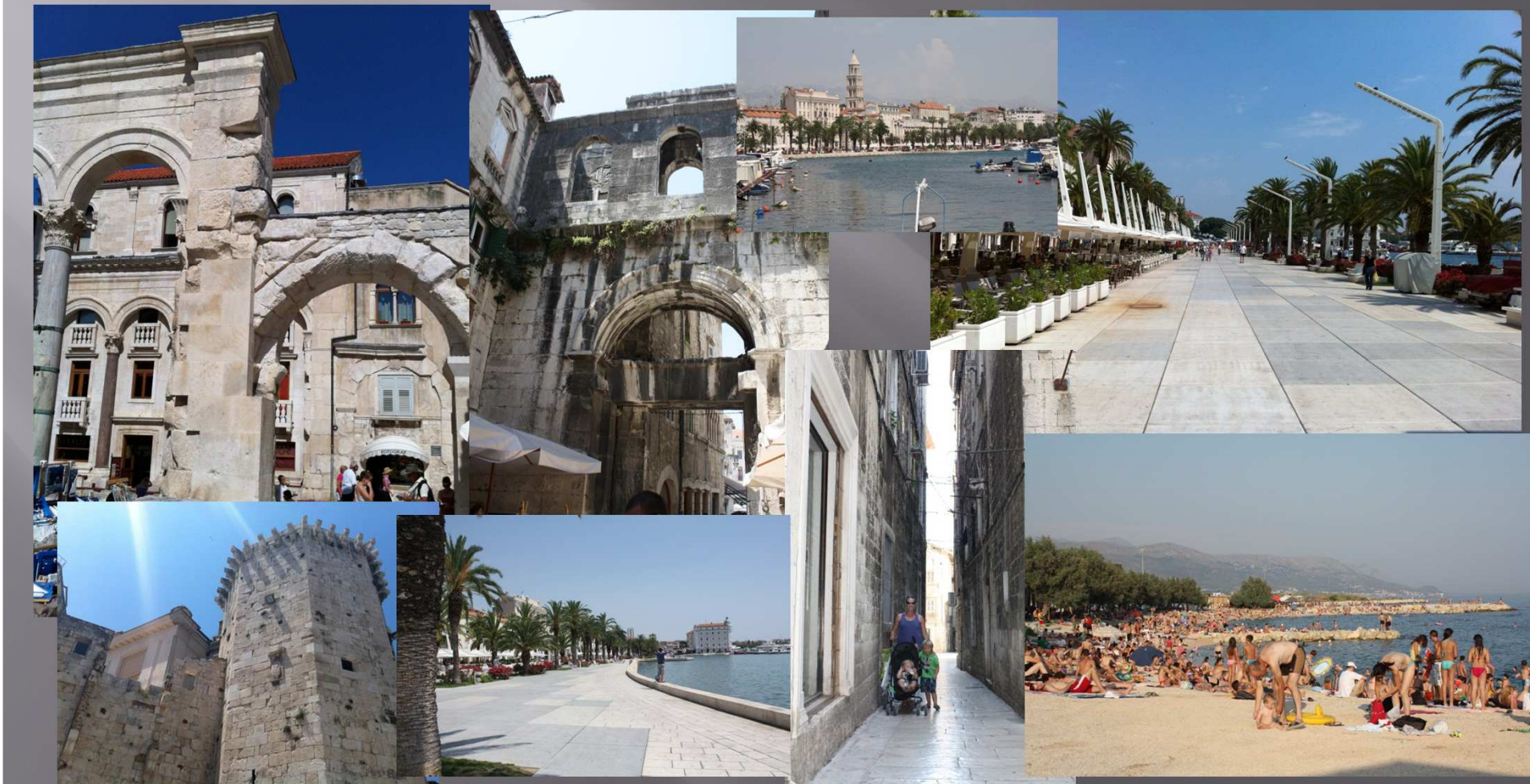
Day 9 – Korcula to Hvar. Another off day. Hvar was a small coastal town, but the port of choice for the rich and famous, with both Bernie Ecclestone’s and Tom Cruise’s yachts in town. Had an excellent dinner on the boardwalk overlooking the bay, and went for a long midnight stroll along the coast.



Day 10 - Hvar back to Split. Although back in Split, we stayed on the boat this evening, moored in the main port of Split. Our final water polo game of the tour was this evening, a short walk away from the boat. Once again we played team water polo in this game, and were winning comfortably, until half way through the second quarter someone, looking well into their 50's strolls in and jumps into the water at the start of the third. Single handedly, he whips the crap out of us. I've NEVER, played against someone this strong. He was a hole man, and they threw the ball to him regardless of how many marked him, or whether he was above or below water. He was simply phenomenal. In the end, I think we won by 1. Fantastic game to end the tour on. That night we enjoyed a team dinner at a restaurant nearby the pool, overlooking the yacht harbour, and retired for our last night on the water polo tour.



Day 11 - We left split for the connection to Zagreb. Overnight in Zagreb again, for the flight to Jhb. Before leaving split - we strolled the city one more time.



Zagreb

