



atlantis

ATLANTIS DESTINATION GUIDE

Zagreb, Croatia

Welcome!



Zagreb, Croatia

ATLANTIS

We are excited to welcome you to Croatia for this season's Atlantis program! The whole Atlantis Team looks forward to working with you as you discover your new home. We trust that your time in Zagreb will make a significant impact on your journey toward a potential career in medicine.

This program will give you an opportunity to see healthcare through a new perspective and observe how medicine is practiced in a foreign country and culture. We want you to take full advantage of this opportunity to grow and develop a deeper understanding of international healthcare.

This is not designed to be a luxury vacation—this is a challenging and exciting step in your professional development. What you get out of this experience will depend on what you put into it; the more you can prepare and be proactive, the more you will accomplish and learn.

In this guide, you will find specific details on how to prepare for your Atlantis program, and more details will be provided to you as your departure date approaches. We look forward to meeting you and are excited to accompany you on this adventure!

Sincerely,

Viktoria Bedo & Peter Soltesz
Atlantis Regional Directors - Central Europe

Zagreb



Get to Know Your Host City

Zagreb is the capital and the largest city of Croatia, with a population of over one million people across its expansive metropolitan area. While not as well known as its coastal counterparts, Zagreb deserves equal attention for its breathtaking location along the Sava River at the base of the Medvednica mountain. A city with an ancient history dating back to Roman times coupled with the modern comforts of a bustling city, Zagreb offers the best of both worlds.



Fun ways to prepare for Croatia:

1.

PLAY SOME CROATIAN MUSIC!



Croatia has a long history of Croatian folk music, but you can find some modern hits as well. Listening to music and learning to distinguish between words in the lyrics is a great way to start tuning your ear to a new language--and learning about some new cultural icons in the process!

2.

LEARN TO COUNT IN CROATIAN



Learn to count to twenty in Croatian, and count up or down whenever you use the stairs.



2 Different Hospital Partners

Right in the capital of Croatia, the hospitals in Zagreb hold a lot of importance for the country. The two hospitals that we are partnered with are the Klinička bolnica Sveti Duh (Holy Spirit Clinical Hospital) and the Klinicki Bolnicki Centar Sestre Milosrdnice (Sisters of Mercy Hospital). A mouthful, but you'll get the hang of it. Both are public hospitals originating in the 1800s, and have as much history as any other monument in the city.



Interacting with your host doctor

As in U.S. hospitals, you can expect to encounter a range of personalities and engagement levels among the doctors you'll be shadowing in your host hospital. While some doctors are very engaging and enjoy explaining procedures to those observing, other doctors may be very focused on their patients and may not talk very much at all. We encourage our students to remain respectful and appreciative of their work, while remaining open to asking investigative questions when appropriate. You are the detective in an amazing opportunity to explore and probe the depths of an entirely new healthcare system—what insights will you take away?



Navigating the Language Barrier

Though many people in your hospital may know some English, Croatian will be the primary language spoken in the hospital departments. Being surrounded by a new language can certainly be a challenging part of visiting a new country, but we've found that such a situation also creates a unique opportunity for personal growth and increased cultural competence. To prepare to enter this new language environment and get the most from your time in the hospital, we suggest doing your best to become proficient in common words and phrases before your departure—you'll be amazed at how practicing just 10 minutes a day can add up over time! We suggest starting your practice through a website or app like Duolingo, and adding other modes of learning depending on what works best for you. If this seems daunting, rest assured! Most of our students do not have prior experience in the language of their host country, and there is still a wealth of information and experiences waiting for you regardless of language proficiency.



Minding the Time

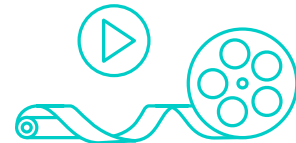
As a newcomer and guest in your host hospital, being on time to shadow each day has extra importance; doing so ensures that your host doctor is able to attend to their patients to the best of their ability. You are required to arrive at your daily meeting point at least 15 minutes prior to the start time in your assigned department. This being said, the perception and treatment of time in your host country may be different from your own. Though we may typically be used to people arriving on time in our own culture, waits and delays may be more common in the culture of your host country, especially within the hospital environment where unexpected events and patient situations impact scheduling on a daily basis. If this does occur, we would encourage you to embrace it as part of the cultural immersion experience, but still feel free to inquire about the expected timing of events. It can also be common for departments to experience slower days as part of "ebb and flow" of hospital life. This can provide an opportunity for noting any insights about what you've been experiencing and a chance to focus on the more "constant" elements of the hospital — elements that have an immense impact on the patient experience (e.g. hospital design and administrative strategy).

More fun ways to prepare for

Croatia:

3.

WATCH MOVIES IN CROATIAN



Even with the English subtitles on, you are sure to pick up words here and there that may help you in conversation. While generally Croatia has a high level of English fluency, it is always helpful to pick up a few words.

4.

FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH CROATIAN WORDS



Familiarize yourself with the Croatian words for basic anatomy, directions, and food. Have a friend or family member quiz you.

Weekly Schedule



Monday - Thursday

- 8AM** Light Breakfast
- 9AM** Shadowing
- 5 hours per day
 - Switch specialties every week
 - Typically 2 students per department
 - Free time
- 6PM** Group Meal (Monday & Wednesday only)



Friday

- 8AM** Light Breakfast
- 9AM** Cultural Excursion
- Weekly group outing
 - Organized by your Site Manager
 - For example, hiking or visiting a nearby city



Saturday- Sunday

- 8AM** Light Breakfast
- 9AM** Free time

ACTUAL PROGRAM SCHEDULES MAY VARY (E.G. ADJUSTMENTS FOR HOSPITAL AVAILABILITY AND LOCAL HOLIDAYS).



Cuisine

Ah, Croatian food! Similar to a lot of Central European culinary styles, Croatian food is hearty and warm. The best way to describe the traditional Croatian dishes is by imagining the kind of meal you want to eat when you come in from the cold. What does that mean? Well, let's just say that most meals center around meat, dairy, cheese, bread, and potatoes.

The coastal regions of Croatia will have a heavy seafood influence as well, but Zagreb's northern locations lends itself to the more traditional fare.

Some dishes you may have heard of, like Goulash or Schnitzel, but the majority will have names you are totally unfamiliar with! Rest assured, if your Site Manager is around they can tell you what Povitica or Fritule is.

Regional influences on Croatian cuisine come from contact with the Slavic, Hungarian, and Turkish peoples over time, making Croatian food, quite literally, a melting pot of flavors.

Here are a couple more tips to help you acclimate to a new cuisine:

- Croatian food isn't a style that you will find often in the U.S.! Be open to expanding your palate to more traditional flavors.
- Espresso is much stronger than American coffee, both in terms of caffeine content and acidity. Your body may protest overindulgence.
- If you order water, you will likely have to pay for it.
- If you have any allergies or food sensitivities, always ask if a food or drink may contain a potential allergen, and bring emergency allergy medication, just in case.
- Make sure to stay on top of your food allergies if you have any. Americans are very aware of these things on menus, but Croatian restaurants may not be. Be sure to ask!



Packing Guide

We recognize that each of our Students has different packing preferences, but here's a list to get you started!

MUST-HAVE ITEMS:

- Your wallet, with ~\$150 cash USD to be converted upon arrival
- Outfits to wear while shadowing (business casual)
- Outfits to wear while discovering your host city (casual)
- Shoes to wear while shadowing (closed-toed, semi-professional, comfortable)
- Shoes to wear while discovering your host city (comfortable)
- A copy of your iNext insurance information
- A piece of paper with emergency info (Site Manager's number, housing address, and the Atlantis emergency number)

OTHER IMPORTANT ITEMS:

- Plane ticket(s)
- Your passport and a copy
- Your ID (and a copy), and student ID
- A small notebook for shadowing
- Seasonal clothing
- Pajamas and Toiletries
- Copy of iNext insurance information
- Phone and charger
- Plug adaptor and voltage convertor
- Emergency cold medication
- Water bottle, backpack, hat
- Sunglasses, sunscreen, and swimsuit
- Enough prescription medication for the length of your stay



Excursions

Our program excursions are specially planned to offer a deeper look into your host culture, and we highly encourage participation for both the educational benefit and the pure enjoyment of exploring a new place with others who share your interests in travel and medicine. However, if your travel plans conflict with the events your Site Manager has planned, we ask that you notify your Site Manager several days in advance so that they're able to plan the excursion accordingly.

Excursions range from historical tours to culinary and cultural explorations. Your Site Manager will inform you of the different excursions they have planned during your program orientation.



Safety

Though a program abroad is an exciting opportunity to have fun and discover a new part of the world, it's important to be especially mindful of safety given your unfamiliarity with the surrounding environment.

Pickpocketing is much more common in Europe than in the United States. We advise keeping an eye on your belongings and using across-the-body bags with zippers to protect against pickpockets. Make sure you know Croatia's emergency phone number (112), and always travel in groups. There are many beggars in Zagreb, but you need not feel intimidated by them; simply be cautious.

A Few More Tips

THE CROATIAN CULTURE SHOCK SURVIVAL GUIDE:

- Air conditioning is less common in Europe. Your room might not have one, or (in the event that it does) it might run warmer than your typical American unit.
- There is (almost) always room for one more person on the bus/metro. Personal space? What personal space. Americans are culturally loud; try to speak and laugh quietly.
- You may have to pay to use the restroom. Keep some coins on hand—and tissues.
- It is fairly common for the Croatians (transportation operators, nurses, etc) to go on strike. If you find yourself stranded in another city, contact your Site Manager.
- You don't have to pay 10 dollars for a flimsy umbrella! It is acceptable to haggle with street and market vendors. Don't try it with shopkeepers, though. (Check with your Site Manager for more tips on this.)
- You don't have to tip your waiter, taxi driver, etc!



Currency

The currency in Croatia is the Croatian Kuna (HRK). Kuna generally has a lower exchange rate than US dollars (meaning that your dollar goes farther), but we encourage checking the exchange rate before your departure to become familiar with what you might expect to pay for meals and other items.

Unlike the US, Croatia is a “cash-based” country, which means that paying by credit or debit card might not always be an option. We recommend bringing the equivalent of 150 USD, to be converted into HRK upon arrival. Your Site Manager will show you where you can find the nearest ATM to your housing, so that you’re able to continue withdrawing money during your stay.



Communication

While on your program, you'll primarily be communicating with your Site Managers and the other students in your group through WhatsApp, an international communication app that allows you text and call for free using wifi. If you use WhatsApp outside of wifi, standard charges may apply. You can download WhatsApp for free through the App Store.

For all other communication you will be provided with an international SIM card or simple phone when you arrive at your program site, to use during the duration of your program. We HIGHLY recommend looking into purchasing an international data plan for the couple of days before and after your program, so that you'll have a way to use data while you're traveling to and from your site. International plans can be purchased on a day-today basis from most cellphone companies.

A Few More Tips (Cont.)

THE CROATIAN CULTURE SHOCK SURVIVAL GUIDE:

- Dress conservatively, especially if you want to visit churches; they have dress codes! (Shoulders must be covered, no shorts or short skirts, etc.)
- You will walk A LOT. Be prepared to quadruple your average steps on American soil. And bring durable, comfortable shoes—the cobblestones are unforgiving.
- You don't go to the “bar” to get beer; bars are where you go to get coffee and pastries. Long, leisurely meals are a way of life in Croatia (none of this flipping tables business)! If you want your bill in a hurry, you may have to ask for it.
- The Croatian are friendly and humble people. They are also culturally very different than the European style you might expect from a Southern European country. A nomadic history and a colder climate has made them stoic, yet welcoming. They will also likely have a higher English fluency due to the difficulty of the Croatian language.

As you prepare to embark on your Atlantis program, we highly encourage spending some time researching your host city. We're incredibly excited to help you prepare for this time of exploration, adventure, and growth in one of Croatia's cultural treasures.

**“Travel and change of place impart
new vigour to the mind...”**

—SENECA

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4301 N Fairfax Dr. #701
Arlington, VA 22203
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