



## **NOLS ALUMNI TRIP**

### **SEA KAYAKING ELAPHITI ISLANDS, CROATIA**

**SEPTEMBER 15-21, 2017**

#### **Features of this Trip**

- Old Stone Guesthouse Accommodations
- Village and Island Town Cultural Interaction
- Enjoy Adriatic Culinary Endeavors
- Inter-tidal, Coastal, and Island Exploration
- Weather Assessment and Passage Planning
- Paddle Along Limestone Cliffs and Lush Adriatic Islands
- Develop Sea Kayak Technical Skills and Touring Strategies
- Swim and Explore Limestone Reefs and 'Green Caves'

**Cost: \$2,350 (Includes Pre/Post Trip Lodging)**

**Minimum Age: 21**

#### **Trip Description**

This trip is set among the Elaphiti Island Archipelago just north of Dubrovnik, Croatia. Traveling the coastline by sea kayak offers a beautiful lens through which to explore the culturally and historically rich region of southern Croatia. The archipelago includes many islands, each with its own historical significance and charm. Along with a tour through time, you will have opportunities to indulge in traditional Adriatic culinary specialties that our island hosts will occasionally prepare for us. As we paddle our way through the archipelago, you will further develop your ocean awareness, technical paddling skills, and sea kayak touring expedition strategies.

On most evenings we will settle into a new guesthouse on a different island. These guesthouses are converted old stone buildings. Amenities vary from one guesthouse to another. Most guesthouses offer double occupancy rooms with double or twin beds. There are typically shared bathrooms and a community kitchen. Open terraces overlooking the sea are features of most guesthouses!

Weather will likely provide challenge and learning opportunities, as there are a variety of regional wind patterns that can settle in. Paying close attention to weather forecasts, and adapting our daily plans accordingly, will play a strong role in this trip.

We aim to have ample time for exploring the islands and towns by foot. Pristine wilderness and ancient culture blend with the modern world, and will be available for us to explore.

Participants should bring an extra measure of flexibility, good cheer and "Expedition Behavior" to help our sea kayak expedition succeed. As with all expeditions, there may be minor logistical wrinkles or plan change due to weather. All great ocean travelers learn to adapt to the challenges that come their way and embrace adversity with a positive attitude!

Alumni trips are more relaxed than a typical course; however, it is not a vacation or a guided trip. Trips are self-reliant in remote areas where evacuation to medical facilities can take several days. During the trip, you will stay in guesthouses, help prepare occasional group meals, and care for yourself and others. The expedition emphasizes hands-on learning and application of new skills.

## **Croatia**

After years of sporadic and bitter fighting, Croatia formally declared independence from the Communist state of Yugoslavia in 1991 and in 2009 joined the NATO alliance. The Republic of Croatia has a population of 4.5 million people and the official language is Croatian. However, English is becoming more widely spoken, especially in the tourism industry. The country's utterly impressive transition from being war-torn to being primarily hospitality and tourism-focused has made it a truly worthwhile destination.

The primary islands that comprise the Elaphiti Archipelago are Olipa, Sipan, Lopud and Kolocep. They are a beautiful string of islands that lay guardian to the ancient city of Dubrovnik. The three inhabited islands of Sipan, Lopud and Kolocep, are canvassed in 100-year old pine groves, carol trees, and olive groves. You can also find gardens of lemon and orange trees throughout. These islands are scattered with ruins of pre-romanesque churches, monasteries, and nobleman residences. They have laid claim to many great seafarers and shipbuilding has also played an important role on Kolocep during the Republic of Ragusa era.

The origin of Dubrovnik is widely debated by historians and scientists. From lore indicating it was first an island providing shelter for refugees to being founded by Greek sailors, it has developed throughout the ages. Steeped in maritime trade history with large fleets of merchant ships trading throughout the world, Dubrovnik has always been a significant port and center of commerce. Over the years, it has seen many different periods of reign and controversy, yet it continues to thrive in the modern world with tourism as a primary industry.

## **Environment**

Autumn in Croatia is a transitional season— summer's hot and sunny days and calm winds give way to stronger breezes and more varied weather patterns. We will likely experience the typical Maestrale or consistent diurnal breeze as well as some challenging winds produced by what is known as the Bora and Jugo wind patterns. The Bora and Jugo are typically winter wind patterns that can blow at any time of the year. Average high temperatures are in the low to mid 70's degrees F, while the average lows fall into the 50-60's F. This is typically a dynamic time of year to paddle throughout the islands; occasional rain showers are a bit more prevalent and typical autumn water temperature is in the low 70's F.

## **Planned Trip Progression**

This trip begins and ends in Dubrovnik, Croatia. Participants fly into Dubrovnik, Croatia (airport code DBV) arriving **on or before September 15**.

For those eager to embrace opportunities exploring Europe, this start date also allows a seamless transition from the [Alumni Dolomites hiking trip](#) (Sept 7 – Sept 14) with a full day travel and transition over to Croatia!

If possible, we recommend arriving a day or so early to allow for travel snafus and to get over jet lag. Upon arrival, there will be a bus waiting to transfer passengers into the Old Town of Dubrovnik. You buy the ticket (at the counter before boarding the bus, or sometimes on the bus). The cost is 35 HRK/5 EUR (~\$7). Take the bus to the Pile Gates at Old Town or the Main Bus Station. Then grab a taxi to the **Villa Glavic Dubrovnik** (~\$10-15). NOLS provides shared accommodation in double or triple rooms (if you are a couple or would like to stay with someone in particular, please let us know).

**On September 15**, we will meet for a short orientation meeting at **7:00 pm in the lobby of Villa Glavic Dubrovnik**. We will discuss the general plan for the week, details for departure day, offer advice on gear, and hand out paddle jackets and PFD's. After the meeting, you will be on your own to pack ready for the following morning departure, relax, and rest.

After breakfast on **September 16**, we will meet at **8 a.m.** We will transfer to our launch site at Banici. We will review the boat gear, basic paddle strokes, paddle signals, and essential safety information. Then we will pack the boats and head out to our first destination at Broce. From September 16 – 21 we will paddle, hike and explore the islands of Olipa, Sipan, Lopud, and Kolocep among the Elaphiti Archipelago!

**On September 21**, weather dependent, we will make our final paddle either along the City Wall cliffs of Old Town Dubrovnik arriving in the heart of Old Town itself, or we may venture up the fjord-like valley Rijeka Dubrovacka, following the ocean to the head of the river Ombla for a little optional kayak surfing at the river weir. Finally, we will load up the boats and be transferred back to Villa Glavic Dubrovnik to shower, relax, and wrap up the trip. There will be an optional no host dinner out in the Old Town to celebrate our week of adventure! Folks will then continue their travels onward or return home **no earlier than September 22**.

### **Pre trip - Optional Old Town sight-seeing**

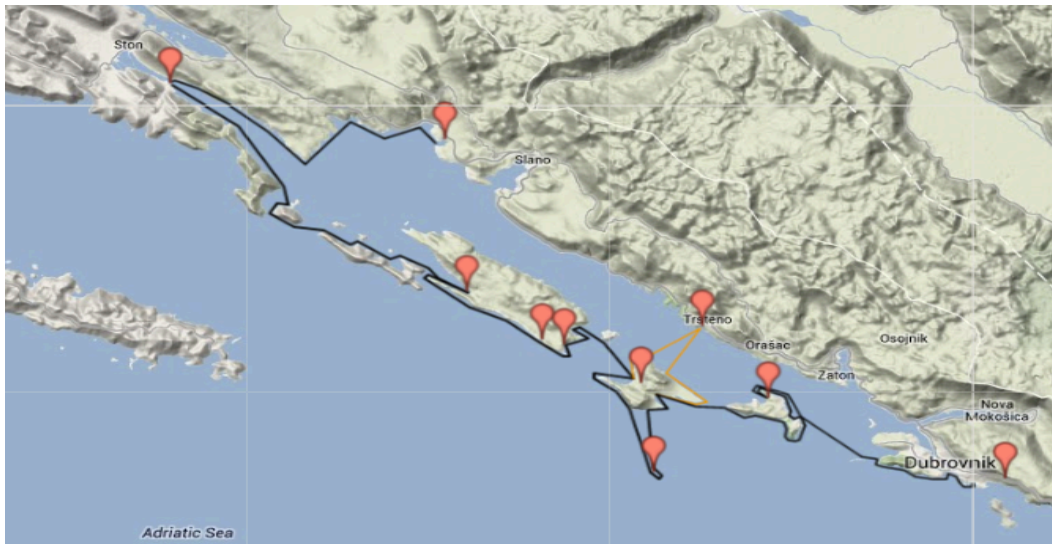
For those eager to explore the area before the trip begins, there will be an optional evening wine and cheese sampling **September 14 at 5pm** at the hotel lobby.

The following morning **September 15** NOLS trip instructors will accompany the group on a 2-4 hour informal sight-seeing outing. This may include a 1-1.5hour walking tour exploring inside the labyrinth of 'Old Town Dubrovnik' and its fascinating history.

Afterwards, you may choose to continue exploring on your own, or with trip participants. Perhaps walking a section along the Old Town perimeter fortress wall with views across the Adriatic Sea, or catch the cable car to Mt. Srđ. At the summit, choose to visit the Imperial Fortress which houses the Museum of the Croatian War of Independence, or simply take in impressive views across the Elaphiti Islands while enjoying a strong Croatian coffee or a glass of chilled wine.

If you choose to join us in advance for these activities, please note that you will need to organize an additional night of accommodation for **Friday September 14**. We recommend you use Villa Glavic Dubrovnik.

### **Route Map**



## Planned Itinerary

<b>September 13</b>	Depending on connections and pre-trip plans, many participants will depart the US on this day.	
<b>September 14</b>	We advise you to arrive on this day, allowing for jet lag, possible baggage snafus and optional activities on 9/15. For those in town, we'll host an optional wine and cheese sampling at the Villa Glavic at 5p.m. where we'll introduce local wines and cheeses. It's a chance to meet the group and get a taste of the region!	Lodging: on your own, but we suggest Villa Glavic.  Dinner on your own, possibly with new friends after wine sampling!
<b>September 15</b>	Arrive in Dubrovnik, Croatia (airport code DBV) <b>on or before this day</b> . NOLS provides single-gender paired accommodation in double or triple rooms (if you are a couple please let us know). <b>There will be an orientation meeting at 7:00 pm in the Villa lobby.</b>	Lodging: provided by NOLS at Villa Glavic (we'll double up same gender pairs – let us know if you're a couple!).  Dinner on your own.
<b>September 16 - 22</b>	After breakfast we will meet at <b>8 a.m.</b> We will transfer to our launch site, review the essentials and paddle away.	Breakfast included with hotel. Lodging and meals at guesthouses.
<b>September 21</b>	Paddle into our pick-up point, (Old Town or the Rijeka Dubrovacka), load boats and transfer back to the Villa Glavic. There will be an optional no host dinner out in Old Town to celebrate our week of adventure!	Lodging: provided by NOLS at Villa Glavic (same gender paired rooms).  No host dinner.
<b>September 22</b>	Return home or travel onward on your own.	Breakfast included with hotel.

## Trip Logistics

NOLS provides single-gender paired lodging on **September 15** and **September 21** at the Villa Glavic in Dubrovnik. Reservations have already been made for these two nights, so **please do not contact them for a reservation**, unless you plan to stay additional nights before September 15 or after September 21.

### **Villa Glavic Dubrovnik**

Frana Supila 14b, 20 000 Dubrovnik

<http://www.adriaticluxuryhotels.com/en/villa-glavic>

\*NOLS will organize transfers from the Villa Glavic to our launch site and from our pick up back to Villa Glavic on the last day.

### **Arrival and Departure**

As a U.S. citizen all you need to enter into Croatia is a U.S. Passport that is valid for more than the duration of your stay. Please check the expiration date of your current Passport and update it as necessary. You are entitled a stay of up to 90 days as a tourist. Croatia officially became a member of the European Union in July 2013. Participants from outside of the USA will need to check on their specific visa requirements.

Multiple airlines provide service to Dubrovnik, Croatia connecting through several major European cities.

### **If You Are Delayed On Arrival Day**

If you're unable to arrive in Dubrovnik on time, please let our office in Lander know by calling 800.332.4280 and we will work to arrange an alternative plan at your expense.

### **Travel Insurance**

We recommend making travel plans as soon as possible. It may be beneficial to purchase tickets that are refundable or changeable. Travel insurance is worth exploring in case unforeseen events change your plans or if NOLS has to cancel an alumni trip for any reason. Check with your personal insurance carrier to discuss options or contact Travel Guard at [www.travelguard.com](http://www.travelguard.com) or 800.826.4919. The "Protect Assist" program is perhaps best for budget-conscious travelers.

### **Phone Service**

You may be able to set up a global plan for your phone during your stay in Croatia. Contact your service provider to learn if service is available and for plan options.

### **Money / Currency**

The official currency in Croatia is the Kuna (HRK). The euro is used in some locations, however, you will likely receive a poor exchange rate. Though Croatia joined the European Union in 2013, the country has not adopted exclusive use of the Euro. Kuna are widely available through ATM's around the country, and ATM's typically give the best exchange rate. Credit cards may be used in larger cities, but the more remote we go, the less useful they are. At the time of year when we paddle, many larger stores or restaurants start to close for the season or disable their credit card service. We recommend having a couple hundred dollars worth of Kuna in cash as we may choose to have a meal or two out along the way, which will be your responsibility.

**Registration and Payment**

Call the NOLS alumni office at 800.332.4280 to enroll. A non-refundable deposit of \$200 reserves your space on the trip. Enrollment is complete upon receipt of your final payment and your application forms (Application, Medical Form, Proof of Insurance Form, and Release and Assumption of Risk Waiver). Forms and complete tuition are due by Friday **July 21, 2016**.

**Tuition includes lodging on the first and last night of the trip, all meals starting with breakfast on September 16 through lunch on September 21, all group equipment, permits, instruction and transport from Dubrovnik to our drop off and return from our pick up. Dinner is your responsibility on September 15 and September 21.**

**Any costs incurred by evacuations are the responsibility of trip participants.**

The NOLS alumni office is located at the NOLS Headquarters, 284 Lincoln St, in Lander, WY 82520. We can be reached at 800.332.4280, or via email: [alumni@nols.edu](mailto:alumni@nols.edu).



## **NOLS ALUMNI TRIP SEA KAYAKING ELAPHITI ISLANDS, CROATIA EQUIPMENT GUIDELINES**

Welcome to the Croatia Sea Kayak Trip. Please review this equipment list thoroughly and use it as you pack. Most everything you need for your trip is listed. Please remember that these are guidelines and using your own judgment is appropriate. If you have questions about the gear, please call the alumni office at 800.332.4280

### **GROUP EQUIPMENT**

All items listed in this section are provided by NOLS and are shared among all expedition members. Group equipment is included as part of the trip cost.

Sea Kayaks	Navigation Charts
Kayak Paddles	Equipment Repair Kits
Kayak Accessories	First Aid Kits
Marine Radio	Emergency Communication

### **PERSONAL GEAR PROVIDED FOR YOU**

PFD (life vest)	Spray Skirt
Paddling Jacket	Dry Bags

### **PERSONAL GEAR:**

*Minimizing weight and bulk is an important priority. Whenever possible, choose equipment that fills multiple needs and enables another item to be left behind.*

### **FOOTWEAR**

- \_\_\_ **Sandals:** Tevas, Chacos, or flip flops.
- \_\_\_ **Water/Boat Shoes for Paddling:** Neoprene booties or an old pair of tennis shoes work great.
- \_\_\_ **“Town” Shoes:** 1 Pair of comfy tennis shoes or other for cruising around town (optional).
- \_\_\_ **Socks:** 1-2 Pair if you are bringing shoes. Neoprene socks can be a nice liner for water shoes.

## UPPER AND LOWER BODY GARMENTS

(Keep in mind that high temperatures will likely be mid 70's and lows mid 50's)

**\* Think simple systems...**

### \_\_\_ **"Paddling Clothes:"**

- \_\_\_ 1-2 Sun shirts for paddling (short or long sleeved) or a rash guard paddling shirt.
- \_\_\_ 1 Long underwear top for chilly days on the water.
- \_\_\_ 1 Paddle jacket (provided by NOLS).
- \_\_\_ 1-2 Pair shorts (one to double as a swimsuit).
- \_\_\_ 1 Pair long underwear bottoms for chilly days on the water to wear under rain pants.
- \_\_\_ 1 Pair rain pants.

**\* Think what would be nice for an evening on the terrace or around town...**

### \_\_\_ **"Town Clothes:"**

- \_\_\_ 1 Pair casual shorts.
- \_\_\_ 1 Pair casual pants (ie. jeans).
- \_\_\_ 1 "Dinner" shirt.
- \_\_\_ 1 Fleece or lightweight insulating jacket.
- \_\_\_ 1 Raincoat.

## SLEEPING AND STORAGE BAGS

**\* The guesthouses provide towels, sheets, pillows and blankets.**

**\* Typical island guesthouse accommodation utilizes double or twin beds. We will do our best to have individual beds for each person, unless you are a couple. However, you may end up sharing a double bed with separate blankets and pillows (akin to sleeping next to each other in a tent). If you are not comfortable with this, please bring along a Therm-a-rest style sleeping pad and sleeping bag so you can have your own space.**

**\* Packing your gear in a couple small 'duffle style' zip bags lined with plastic bags or small dry bags makes for ease of packing the kayaks. NOLS will provide dry bags if you don't have your own. Please avoid bringing "suitcase" style luggage as it does not pack well!**

**\* Bring a large thin nylon duffel bag to carry all your gear from the kayak to the guesthouse. Ikea shopping bags also work well!**

## MISCELLANEOUS PERSONAL GEAR

- \_\_\_ **1-2 Bathing suits:** If your shorts don't double as one and it can be nice to have one dry one.
- \_\_\_ **Underwear:** As necessary.
- \_\_\_ **Sun Hat:** With enough brim to keep the sun off your face *and ears*; as well as a tie down string for high winds.
- \_\_\_ **Warm Hat:** For chilly evenings or paddling on a cool day.
- \_\_\_ **Sunglasses (with strap)**



- \_\_\_ **Lip Balm:** Stick, cream or tube type moisturizing balm with SPF 15 or greater.
- \_\_\_ **Sunscreen:** SPF 30 or greater.
- \_\_\_ **Rash Guard:** a long-sleeved, shirt that can be worn while snorkeling and paddling.
- \_\_\_ **Prescription Glasses and Contact Lenses:** If you wear them, bring a spare pair of glasses or lenses. Contact lens wearers should also bring a pair of glasses as backup.
- \_\_\_ **Personal toilet kit:** biodegradable soap, toothpaste, toothbrush, floss, hand moisturizer, hand sanitizer, ear plugs, nail clippers, etc.
- \_\_\_ **Personal medicines**
- \_\_\_ **Headlamp:** Should be durable and lightweight.
- \_\_\_ **Notebook and Pens/Pencils:** A small, lightweight pad is fine.
- \_\_\_ **Water bottles:** 1 one-quart bottle or a 'camelback' style water bladder.
- \_\_\_ **Passport:** Essential! No visas needed.
- \_\_\_ **Money:** For cab, and food.
- \_\_\_ **Clean Clothes and Shower Items:** For the return trip.

#### **OPTIONAL MISCELLANEOUS GEAR**

- \_\_\_ **Small book**
- \_\_\_ **Camera**
- \_\_\_ **Dive Mask and Snorkel:** Personal fit is best
- \_\_\_ **PFD:** If you prefer your own.
- \_\_\_ **Paddling Gloves:** For sun protection can come in handy.