
Croatia National Day Special

Rich cultural heritage amid beautiful nature

DRAZEN HRASTIC

AMBASSADOR OF CROATIA



Croatia marks its Statehood Day on May 30, commemorating the establishment of its first democratically elected parliament in 1990. Just a year later, in 1991, Croatia declared indepen-

dence and endured the hardships of the victorious Homeland War (1991 to 1995), ultimately securing its sovereignty and opening a new chapter in its history.

Although the youngest member of the European Union, Croatia has now been part of the EU for nearly 12 years. In 2023, it further advanced its integration by joining the Schengen Area and adopting the euro as its official currency. And 2024 is the 16th anniversary of NATO membership.

Croatia stood out in 2024 as one of the best-performing EU economies in terms of gross domestic product growth, maintaining strong momentum into the first quarter of 2025. Growth and a notable reduction in the debt-to-GDP ratio have enabled Croatia to not only strengthen its economic stability but also contribute to international assistance efforts, with Ukraine the major recipient.

Croatia is globally renowned for its breathtaking landscapes and cultural richness, with 10 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, numerous national parks and 17 UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage entries. Situated at the crossroads of Central Europe and the Mediterranean, Croatia has cultivated a diverse and vibrant culinary tradition.

Two of its four major regional cuisines are rooted in the Mediterranean diet — widely regarded, along with washoku, as one of the healthiest in the world. Its winemaking tradition of more than 2,400 years is complemented by spirits and beer production.

Croatia welcomed over 21.3 million tour-

ists and recorded more than 108.7 million overnight stays in 2024. We hope that the number of Japanese tourists will soon return to its pre-pandemic figure of around 160,000 annually. Croatia is proudly participating in the Osaka Expo, passing the milestone of 100,000 visitors at its pavilion.

The friendship between Croatia and Japan has grown through mutual support in difficult times, including the Croatian Homeland War, the Great East Japan Earthquake, and the two major earthquakes that struck Zagreb and Central Croatia in 2020. Our future holds untapped potential, particularly in trade, investment, science and technology.

Croatia greatly values Japan's role in global affairs and is committed to deepening this friendship. The Croatian Embassy will continue to foster these strong ties.

.....
This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.