



Croatian Cultural Society
Wellington (Inc)
HRVATSKI DOM

in this issue >>>

Recent & Upcoming
Events
News
Membership
Did you know?

Prosinac (December)
in Croatia
Language
Radio
Greetings

Prosinac (December) 2023 Newsletter

Recent Events

Mystery Bus Trip By Mary Begovich

A thoroughly enjoyable event! The weather was pleasant and we had a happy, relaxed group of travellers. Our excellent tour guide, Emilia Hrstich, planned visits to two interesting venues and also provided a delicious complimentary morning tea. The first venue was the Big Mac Slabs Furniture Creative Centre at Paraparaumu. There we saw a large display of unique indoor and outdoor furniture all of which was made on site. An



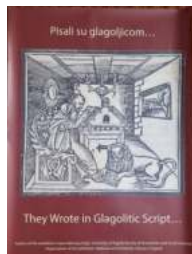
excellent place to do some Christmas shopping as their garden art, sculptures, paintings, pottery, homewares, jewellery, ceramics and scarves were really beautiful. From there we travelled up to Lavender Creek Farm in Te Horo. While it wasn't quite the right time to see all the lavender plants in full bloom, the shop was full of everything lavender and we had an interesting talk by the owner on the oil producing process and other products and about New Zealand's first full-time studio potter, Mirek Smišek who was born in Czechoslovakia and set up his studio in Te Horo in 1969. Our adventure ended with time to relax and enjoy a meal at the Fishermen's Table.



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Exhibition and book presentation by guests from Croatia By Maja Krtalić



On 25 November, we had two guest speakers at the Club, Ivana Hebrang Grgić and Ana Barbarić from the University of Zagreb, Croatia.

Ivana and Ana presented a small exhibition titled "They Wrote in Glagolitic Script..." and explained the origins of the Glagolitic Script, the old Croatian alphabet script called Glagoljica. The aim of the exhibition was to display and promote Croatian Glagolitic heritage, Croatian language, history and culture through texts written in the Glagolitic Script. After that, Ivana and Ana talked about their recently published book titled "Their Faraway Home: The Story of Croats in New Zealand Through Publications".



The book explores stories and histories of Croats in New Zealand through newspapers and books published by Croats in New Zealand. The book is available to borrow from our library. Ivana and Ana participated in the Language Café with activities for children and adults and talked to many of our members during their visit.



Christmas Party/Lunch By Pravda Webb & Mary Begovich

Our Christmas Lunch last Sunday was a huge success in so many ways. We enjoyed the company of 60 adults, 7 students and 11 under 12's. It was great to see so many of our community members and friends coming together to celebrate Christmas. The children's beautifully painted faces, games and craft activities provided a great way for them to engage, as well as the arrival of Santa.

We would like to thank all those who helped us in this self-catered event which was a huge task for our aging committee members. Their efforts were well rewarded by feedback they received such as... *"My aunt and cousin loved it. My aunt wants me to pass on that the food was delicious."* *What a special day it was for our family being with everyone and chatting, and tasting the traditional foods, just so yummy! We can appreciate the time and effort that went into making the occasion so enjoyable, compliments to all involved."* *"A great party and a credit to you all for the fabulous food. It was good to see so many people there too!"* *"Kids had a ball and the food was amazing."*

Our special thanks to the students and others for clearing the tables and to those who joined the committee to work so tirelessly in the kitchen during the event and those who came and helped with the cleanup. Thanks also to those who did the heavy lifting at the end of the day.





Upcoming Events

1. **Thursday, 7 December 2023, 6pm-7pm** - A reminder that Dr Gordan Grlić Radman, the Croatian Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, will be joining us during this time. If you are attending, please arrive no later than 5.30 pm.
2. **Language Café** - our Café is taking a break over the holidays. We will be back on Saturday 24th February 2024.

News

35th World Cheese Awards held in Norway – the world's largest global cheese event



Experts from all over the world came together to judge the entries and decide on the winners. Cheeses from Croatia were among the 4,502 entries competing this year and, while they weren't in the top ten, they did well, winning a gold for the Gligora Kolan extra aged cheese and 4 silvers and 5 bronze awards for other entries.

International Cheese & Dairy Awards 2023 – held in the United Kingdom



Istrian sheep's milk cheese Spin was named the best cheese in the world in its category of hard sheep's milk cheese and won the gold medal and trophy.

Membership

Membership Applications (članska pristupnica)

Applications for membership in our Society have been received from:

Rebecca Gaelic
Lachlan Ewing
Phil Guerin

Nominator: Ivan Kolich
Nominator: Ivan Kolich
Nominator: Ivan Kolich

Membership Renewal (Obnova članstva) 2023/2024

For those who haven't yet paid, the Committee reminds you that the subscriptions for 2023/2024 were due for payment on 1st May 2023 and, according to our Rule 16d.ii., as of 1st September, are now overdue. Payment of \$30 may be made via internet banking:

To: Croatian Cultural Society Wellington Inc
Bank A/c: 06-0561-0017339-30
Payment Particulars: insert your initial and surname
Reference: Subs 23/24

If you wish to check your subscription status, contact secretary@croatianculturalsocietywgtm.co.nz

Did you know?

1. That Croatia has the most number of Neanderthals bones in the world? 900 bones of Neanderthal humans (an extinct subspecies of humans called Homo Neanderthalensis who lived until around 40,000 years ago) can be seen at the Neanderthal Museum in Krapina along with 1,200 of their stone tools. It is the largest collection to be found in the one site. The museum is built on the Hušnjakovo hill which is the site where the collection was discovered back in 1899.
2. That the Croatian town Hum which has its own city walls, a church, two small roads and a mayor, is the smallest town in the world.
3. That there are six mummies lying in Crkva Sv. Vlaha (the church of St Blaise) – the largest church in the Istrian town of Vodnjan. The church is a renowned pilgrimage site and has around 15,000 worshippers yearly.
4. That the city of Vinkovci has been resided in for around 8,000 years and is the oldest inhabited city in Europe.

Prosinac (December) in Croatia

by Mary Begovich

The month Prosinac (December) is the start of winter in Croatia and its name means the month of begging. Temperatures are relatively mild along the coast with average daily temperatures ranging between 6°C and 14°C. Inland however, and especially in the mountainous areas, temperatures can drop below freezing. It is a great time to visit the country, if you don't mind the cooler weather, as tourism has slowed down so exploring attractions is quieter and less stressful. Cheaper accommodation can also be found.

Božićne (Christmas) Traditions in Croatia

Nearly 90% of Croatia's population is Catholic and Božić is a big deal. Cities and towns are beautifully decorated. The majority of Croatians start their preparations on Advent Sunday while others prefer to start preparing on **Sveta**



Kata (St Catherine's Day) which is 25th November, and they have a saying 'Sveta Kata zatvara vrata' (St Kate closes the door) suggesting that on that day, there should not be any weddings or other large celebrations. The festive season runs from Sveti Nikola (Saint Nicholas) on 6 December to Sveta tri kralja on 6 January (Epiphany in the Catholic calendar) which is the day the Three Kings arrived to bestow their gifts on baby Jesus.

Some Advent decorations in Zagreb
<https://www.letslearnincroatia.co.uk/blog/christmas-traditions-in-croatia>



Prva adventska nedjelja (Advent Sunday)



The fourth Sunday before Christmas Day is the beginning of the Advent season. Advent wreaths are woven into a joined circle to represent eternity and four candles which represent hope, peace, joy and love are inserted into the wreath. On the first Sunday of advent, the family lights the first candle and then each additional one on the following three Sundays up to Christmas.

Advent wreath
<https://adria-more.hr/en/blog/christmas-traditions-in-croatia/19.html>

Sveti Nikola

Children look forward to this day as, following an old legend that St Nicholas the Bishop secretly brought gifts to the poor through the window at night, well behaved children are rewarded with gifts (usually sweets). The legend also says that St Nicholas had a companion called Krampus and he left sticks for naughty children so they could be punished by their parents. Before going to bed on the night before St Nicholas' visit, children clean their boots and leave them in the windows and in the morning, (remember though that they had to be well behaved,) they find them full of presents.



<https://visitcroatia.com/christmas-traditions-in-croatia-by-our-croatia-concierge/#:~:text=Croatia%20as%20a%20nation%20is,Jesus%20together%20with%20their%20families>

Sveta Lucija (St Lucy's Day) 13 December



An excellent growth of Christmas wheat
<https://www.expatsincroatia.com/bozicna-pšenica-christmas-wheat/>

Sijanje pšenice (sowing the wheat) is an important and unusual tradition in Croatia which dates back to the days when agriculture was the most important trade in Croatia and it was meant to encourage a good crop. In some areas this is called Božićna pšenica (Christmas wheat) and takes place on 4 December. Wheat seeds can be bought in most supermarkets and families sow them in a small dish which is then put under the Christmas tree. If the wheat grows well, it is a sign that the coming year will produce good results. All going well, the wheat will have flourished, and it is tied with ribbons the colours of the Croatian flag.

Badnjak (Christmas Eve) The whole family takes part in decorating their Christmas tree with lights and colourful decorations although this didn't become a custom in Croatia until the mid-19th century. Prior to then, children decked their homes out with flowers and fruits and homemade paper ornaments. In many homes, a Jaslice (nativity scene) is placed under the tree. Christmas Dinner is served on Badnjak and then families go to polnočka (midnight mass on Christmas Eve). Depending on where you are in Croatia, dinner may include dishes such as bakalar (salted cod), turkey, suckling pig, sarme, pasticada (stewed piece of beef topped with gravy) served with gnocchi, squid, seafood risotto. The main meal is followed by a selection of traditional cakes such as breskvice (peaches), fritule (small doughnuts), kiflice (vanilla rolls), mađarica (meaning Hungarian girl but the recipe is actually of Croatian origin), orehnjača (walnut roll), šape (paws) all made from recipes handed down through families.

A selection of sweet dishes which are popular throughout Croatia over Christmas



Mađarica (layered choco-)



Breskvice



Orehnjača



Kiflice



Fritule

<https://travellhomestly.com/croatian-desserts/>



šapice

<https://www.chasingthedonkey.com/best-croatian-desserts-cakes->

Božić (Christmas Day) is usually a quiet day spent with close family and presents are opened. In some regions, it is celebrated with a traditional lunch with roasted meat on the menu. A tradition that has died out was a log being brought into the fireplace where it was sprinkled with wine and lit by the father of the household and kept burning throughout the day. The belief was that this symbolized light on the eve of Christ's birth.

Sveti Stjepan (St Stephen's Day) 26 December also a national holiday and people visit relatives, friends, and neighbours to wish them a merry Christmas.

Doček Nove Godine (New Year's Eve) is celebrated similarly to other countries except for in Fužine, a village which is 30km from Rijeka, where they started a new tradition in 2000 to celebrate it twice. At noon they bid the old year goodbye while enjoying local sausages, mulled wine and dancing and then at midnight the start of the New Year is welcomed.



Events & Activities in December

Advent in 2023 is generally from 3 December to 24 December although it can vary from city to city. Year-round tourism is helped along by the numerous advent festivals, fairs, and seasonal celebrations being held all around Croatia. Cities and towns are decked out with beautiful decorations and lights and activities abound with something for everyone - there are ice skating rinks, amusement parks, concerts, sports and educative programmes, special programmes and bus excursions for children, fairs, Christmas trains, cultural events, advent craft, local cuisine.



The Mandusevac Fountain in Zagreb's Ban Josip Jelačić Square is decorated with an Advent wreath and candles.

<https://www.happy.rentals/blog/345-advent-zagreb-2023>

Zagreb has several times, been named as having the best Christmas market in Europe. The main square has a huge Christmas Tree, thousands of colourful shimmering lights light up Zrinjevac park and Strossmayer's promenade, King Tomislav Square has a very popular ice skating rink, music and art are important and numerous concerts and exhibitions are held. The air is filled with the tantalizing smells of the delicious foods on offer and mulled wine. Decorative ornaments, candles, ceramics, jewellery, scarves, hats, toys and many more items can be found at the numerous market stalls. The oldest and most famous Zagreb market is Dolac and it is surrounded by lots of restaurants, fast foods, coffee shops, bars and smaller shops. Watch this video to see what has been planned for this year's advent in Zagreb – What Magic is in Store? <https://youtu.be/Eb60VMxZAXY?si=Hw1LBN-ufkAmycxN> and here's another one taking you on a tour of a past Advent in Zagreb. https://youtu.be/t_Znfk9Dqsw?si=vkkUGGDYjFEVKdrE

Chocolate Festival in Opatija

If you love chocolate, then this is the place to be. The festival is up to its seventeenth year and runs over 3 days. The best chocolate from global brands to unique producers is presented for visitors to sample and learn how to choose the best wine to go with the authentic desserts that are created by the presenters. An abundance of chocolate is found on the restaurant and café menus. They even have edible chocolate Christmas trees of varying sizes. These dishes are on one of the café's menus – choco tacos, choco tagliatelle with forest fruit and almond ragout, burrito with pulled pork, glazed dark chocolate, cocoa and avocado dressing, choco martini, choco cheese-cake sour, flavoured hot chocolate.



<https://www.visitopatija.com/en/chocolate-festival/gastro-chocolate-mc19>



Adults making chocolate bar with various additions and flowers, making pralines, and tasting.

<https://www.visitopatija.com/en/chocolate-festival/retropatija-chocolate-experience-mc21>



Children decorating chocolate bars

<https://www.visitopatija.com/en/chocolate-festival/retropatija-chocolate-junior-mc88>

Various venues offer adults and children the opportunity to express their creativity by drawing with chocolate, decorating bars of chocolate, or shaping chocolate into a model such as a chocolate-chestnut-hedgehog.



<https://www.visitopatija.com/en/chocolate-festival/>

During the festival, chocolate becomes a very important ingredient at the wellness and spa venues. It is said that a chocolate massage, is rich in antioxidants, encourages the formation of collagen making the skin soft and elastic and reduces tension and stress, leaving you feeling completely relaxed. Some of the massages offered are a chocolate massage while enjoying the taste of praline; a relaxing massage with warm chocolate, cocoa butter and essential oil; or a ritual massage with chocolate oil and consumption of a chocolate energy drink. Hmm – not sure what happens after the massage though – possibly need to take a shower.

Dubrovnik Winter Festival – 1st December to 6th January



The city is beautifully decorated and vibrant with sounds of kolende, (Dubrovnik Christmas songs) and the smell of Dalmatian sweets and mulled wine. Over the 40 days visitors and locals get to enjoy ice-skating, exhibitions, open-air Christmas markets which include handicrafts and decorations made by local artists, traditional music and dancing, local foods, festive holiday treats and concerts. A large variety of activities and storytelling is put on for the children including appearances by Santa Claus.

https://www.123rf.com/photo_31650704_dubrovnik-croatia-may-22-2011-a-croatian-folk-music-group-in-traditional-clothes-in-the-main-street-.html

The final day is extra special as the people dress in traditional costumes and there are parades of floats, musicians and dancers.

Skiing & Snowboarding



Sljeme ski resort

https://www.google.co.nz/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fcroatia4travel.com%2Fsljeme-ski-resort-zagreb%2F&psig=AOvVaw0rCjMz_VzHgg0t8lekw0&ust=1699674171717000&source=images&cd=vfe&opi=89978449&ed=2ahUKEwInqfrwbiCAxkKStgGHZGTCMMQr4kDegQJARBO

Croatia provides opportunities to ski or snowboard more affordably than many other countries in Europe. In the north, there is usually good snow in the mountains for about 3 months. Mt Sljeme near Zagreb has 4 ski runs, 2 ski-lifts and a triple-chair lift. Platak which is 26km from Rijeka has 7 ski runs and 10 km of cross-country skiing trail. There is also a sledding trail and ice-skating rink and rental options for snowmobiling and snowshoeing so that you can explore the mountainous regions.



Snowshoeing at Platak

https://www.google.co.nz/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.snowshoemag.com%2Fsnowshoeing-in-croatia%2F&psig=AOvVaw0rCjMz_VzHgg0t8lekw0&ust=1699673258974000&source=images&cd=vfe&opi=89978449&ved=2ahUKEwJ89_m3vriCaxUEmMGHHex2AUCr4kDegQJARBO



Snowboarding in the Mt Sljeme ski area

<https://www.snowboardguides.com/?id=21917>



Pelješac Wine Cellars Open Days, Ston

This usually takes place during the first weekend in December in Ston which is near Dubrovnik. The year's vintage is fostered through music, sampling goods and workshops. Wine cellars are open for people to tour and taste the wine.

Christmas time in Grabovnica – Salajland

The Salaj family have, for more than twenty years, been creating one of the biggest Christmas displays in Croatia on their 60.000m² estate in Grabovnica, a small village 52 km from Zagreb, and it has enthralled Croatians and tourists from all over the world. The branches of every tree on the estate are decorated with more than two million Christmas lights. Shapes like snowmen, reindeer, penguins, bears, Santa and nativity scenes are also created with lights. Each day ends with fireworks.



Salajland, Photo: Julien Duval, Croatian Tourist Board



Language - Croatian Christmas holiday words/phrases

These Croatian Christmas holiday words may be new to some of you. Try them out on your friends and family.

Badnjak	Christmas Eve	Poklon	gift
Božić	Christmas	Polnočka.....	Christmas Eve Mass
Bor.....	Christmas tree	Adventski vijenac	advent wreath
Doček	waiting for the New Year	Praznici.....	holidays
Božićni ukrasi	Christmas decorations	Božićne kuglice.....	Christmas tree decorations
Božićne pjesme	Christmas carols	Božićna Čestitka	Christmas card
Božićni ručak.....	Christmas lunch	Slaviti.....	celebrate
Čestitka	greeting card	Godišnji odmor	yearly holiday
Prskalice	sprinkles	Božićne lampice	Christmas lights
Sob	reindeer	Vatromet.....	fireworks
Silvestrovo or Stara godina .	New Year's Eve	Kuhano vino	mulled wine
Sretan Božić	Merry Christmas	Sve najbolje.....	all best wishes
Djed Božićnjak.....	Santa Claus	Nova godina	New Year
Sretni blagdani	happy holidays	Uživaj na odmoru	enjoy the holidays
Hoćeš li doći na Božićni ručak kod mene?	Will you come to Christmas lunch at my house?		
Kititi Božićno bor	Decorate a Christmas tree		
Što ćeš raditi na Božić?	What will you do on Christmas?		
Sretna Nova godina.....	Happy New Year		
Što ćemo raditi na Staru godinu?.....	What are we doing on New Year's Eve?		
Što ćeš raditi na Staru godinu?	What will you do on New Year's Eve?		

If you're experiencing a winter Christmas you could use these.....

Kamin	fireplace	Inje or mraz	frost
Klizanje na ledu	ice skating	Led.....	ice
Sanjkanje.....	sledding	Skijanje.....	skiing
Snijeg.....	snow	Snjegović	snowman
Snježne pahuljice	snowflakes	Vruća čokolada.....	hot chocolate

Radio

Tune into FM106.1 and listen to *From Croatia with Love* every Sunday from 12.30 pm to 1.00 pm. You can also log onto the Access Radio website <https://www.accessradio.org.nz/from-croatia-with-love.html> where you can hear our radio programme, and download it, at any time from anywhere in the world.



Stay in touch...

You can find us on

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/CroClubWgtn>

Website www.croatianculturalsocietysocietywgtn.co.nz or

email us on secretary@croatianculturalsocietysocietywgtn.co.nz



Season's Greetings from the Executive Committee

Srećan Božić

We wish you all a very safe and blessed Christmas and New Year

