Toms Dubrovnik Cruise Port Guide: Croatia

Includes maps and aerial photos for your walking tour to the Clock Tower, St Blaise Church, the Cathedral, Maritime Museum, St John's Fortress, the Franciscan Monastery and Dominican Monastery, and walking the walls of the town. The “official” Tourist Board website is described with tips on how to quickly find information. You'll need transportation to visit Cavat.

Dubrovnik Old Town is unique in many respects:

• It's a beautiful Mediterranean port that once rivaled Venice for dominance of the Adriatic sea.
• One of the world's finest and best preserved medieval cities – a UNESCO world heritage site.
• Defensive walls have protected the Old Town for a thousand years. The walls were never breached. They are 9 to 18 feet thick and up to 75 feet high with 5 forts, 16 towers, and bastions.
• The city may be old, but it's alive = a lived-in city. Side streets are lined with homes. There are shops, cafes, restaurants, and hotels. Bazaars and markets are open in the summer.
• Red roofed buildings are attractive and there are Baroque churches, museums, palaces, monasteries, etc.
• The main street Placa (Stradun) has beautiful stonework. The town is pedestrian friendly and easy to walk. Note - narrow side streets are cobblestone and can be steep with many steps in some areas.

CAVEAT

Information contained herein is believed to be accurate. PLEASE verify the information you use for your travel plans. Opinions expressed are my own. This port guide is protected by copyright law - see the last page of this guide for legal notices.

Tom Sheridan
Croatian Currency

The Croatian currency is the Kuna (kn). The code for the currency appears in financial exchange rates as HRK. On January 24, 2012, one US dollar = 5.8 HRK, and one euro = 7.5 HRK.

Before you incur any service or purchase any product, clarify the method of payment. A few businesses will accept US dollars or euros. Many accept credit cards. But credit cards are impractical for small purchases and places that may require cash such as buses, entrances to walk the walls of the Old Town, museums, etc.

Currency can be exchanged at ATM's, banks, travel agencies, and exchange bureaus.

Getting to the Old Town from the cruise ship

Cruise ships either dock at the Port in Gruz or anchor near the Old Harbor and tender passengers into Old Town.

If your ship docks in Gruz, you'll need transportation to Old Town. It's 4 kilometers and a 10-30 minute ride, depending on traffic, from Gruz to Pile Gate entrance of Old Town. (Map at left) Check with your cruise ship regarding how you to get get to the Old Town. If the ship does not provide a bus, you'll have to take a public bus or taxi.

Buses and cabs are at the port. Buses 1, 1a, 1b, and 3 go to Old Town. Buy a ticket for 8 Kunas at the newsstand or 10 Kunas on the bus. A taxi will cost 70 to 100 Kunas. Get local currency at the cruise port. Check the Port Gruz website for the latest information http://www.portdubrovnik.hr/index.php?act=1&lnk=151&lan=en#151

If your ship anchors in the Old Town Harbor and tenders you into shore, you're lucky.

The Old Harbor is beautiful. I'm sure it's more scenic than views from ships docked at the Gruz commercial port. Also, tendering into the old port places you close to Old Town so you don't have to deal with buses or taxis and wasted travel time.

On our first cruise to Dubrovnik, the tender dropped us off at the dock (photo at left). For a 360° photo of this drop dead gorgeous dock, click on this link below http://www.vthawaii.com/EXTRA/Dubrovnik/Dubrovnik23.htm

On our second visit, the tender dropped us off at a park near the beach. It was only a short walk along the road to Ploce Gate. We were walking downhill and had excellent views of the harbor and forts surrounding the town.

The next page has an aerial photo of the Old Town with key landmarks.
The Old Town is NOT large - note the scale of 250 feet. The main street is Placa (Stradun). The Franciscan Monastery tower and Pile Gate are at the West end of Stradun. The Clock Tower is at the East end of Stradun next to St Blaise (Sveto Vlaho) Church. Near the Clock Tower, you will find Sponza Palace, Knezev Dvor (Rector's Palace), and the Cathedral of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. The treasury is at the Cathedral.

Entrances to walk the walls are noted by green asterisks at St Savior Church, St Luke's Church, and the Maritime Museum in St John's Fortress.

Porporela is a favorite place to walk along the breakwater, listen to waves, relax on a park bench, sunbathe, swim, etc. Locals call it “lover's lane”.

I have also shown the location of Banka Kovanica. There are also many ATM's in the town to exchange money.
The 15th century Clock Tower is in Luza Square, the most important square in Old Town. The tower is 31 meters high; it chimes at noon. The entrance from the dock is between the Clock Tower and Sponza Palace.

The Clock Tower overlooks Orlando's Column which symbolizes statehood and freedom. It depicts Roland, the most famous knight of the Middle Ages. He never visited Dubrovnik, but was respected throughout Europe. (photo left)

St Blaise (Sveto Vlaho) Church is to the right of Orlando's Column, but it is not in the photo to the left.

In the 10th century, St Blaise uncovered a plot by Venetians using a “friendly” visit to Dubrovnik as a pretense to study the defenses so they could attack at night. St Blaise saved the city and is the patron saint of Dubrovnik.

The original church was damaged by an earthquake in 1667 and subsequently completely destroyed by fire in 1706. All the bronze, silver, and gold statues in the church melted in the fire. The only thing that survived the fire was the silver statue of St Blaise – judged to be a miracle. The church was rebuilt in 1715. The statue of St Blaise holds a model of the city architecture in his hand (photo above right).
Cathedral of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary

Location: Face the front of St Blaise Church looking down the left side and you'll see the dome of the Cathedral 300 feet to the South.

Richard the Lionheart was shipwrecked on his way back from the 3rd Crusade in 1192 and promised to construct a church wherever he set foot on land. He funded the original Cathedral.

The original Cathedral was destroyed by an earthquake in 1667. It was rebuilt thanks to Stjepan Gradic, a Dubrovnik native, who became Rector of the Vatican Library. He used his influence to get the best Italian architects and masters to Dubrovnik. The cathedral was completed in 1713 with beautiful altars and works of art.

The Cathedral Treasury

The treasury is inside the cathedral. It has religious relics. From April to November 1st, the hours are 9-5 during the week and 11-5 on Sundays and holidays. Admission is 15 kunas.

Rector's Palace

On your way to the Cathedral, you will pass the Rector's Palace. The photo at left is taken from the cathedral looking North to the Clock Tower. The Rector's Palace was the administrative center of Old Town with the Council, courtroom, prisons, arsenal, etc.

It is now used by the Dubrovnik Department of the Museums with displays of furniture, paintings, etc. Because it has excellent acoustics, it is also used for concerts.

Maritime Museum, St John's Fortress

The Maritime Museum is at St John's Fortress which is East of the Cathedral. Displays include shipbuilding and maritime trade. From April to November 1st, hours are 9-6; closed on Monday. Entrance fee is 40 kunas.

There is also an aquarium in the fortress.

The green asterisk marks one of the three entrances to walk the walls around Old Town.

To visit Porporela, exit Old Town next to the Clock Tower, turn right and walk South, outside of the walls, along the sea. Use this link to see a 360° photo of Porporela:
http://www.360cities.net/image/dubrovnik-porporela-croatia#-156.18.9.00,110.0

For more guides, see www.TomsPortGuides.com
Placa (Stradun) – the Main Street in Old Town

Locals call it “Stradun”. I'm told that only visitors call it “Placa”. It's a wide, flat, beautiful street running East to West through the center of Old Town. The Clock Tower is at the Eastern end. At the Western end, you'll find the Franciscan Monastery tower and the Pile Gate. Just outside Pile Gate, you will find buses, taxis, etc.

Stradun is lined with shops, cafes, churches, etc. Be sure to explore some of the narrow side streets. My experience is that the side streets to the South tend to be flat, but streets running North may be steep with many steps because you are sometimes going uphill.

Old Town is rich in history with all sorts of museums, fountains, churches, monasteries, historic buildings, monuments, etc. And because it is a lived-in town and major tourist area, there are many businesses that cater to tourists. You will find many ATM machines to get local currency and a wide variety of shops, restaurants, internet cafes, a post office, travel agencies, art galleries, hotels, i. e., what you would expect to find in a city.

Photos along Placa (Stradun)

Top Left – looking West to Pile Gate and Franciscan Monastery tower on Placa- Stradun. Note the beautiful stone lined street.

Top Right – parades and festivities are common throughout the summer.

Above Right – a folklore dance celebrating a woman's preparation for marriage.

Dubrovnik Old Town is a clean, beautiful place to explore on your own.
Pile Gate at Western end of Placa (Stradun)

Entrance to one of the narrow side streets (photo right)

Typical side street from Placa (Stradun) (below)
Visitors like to walk along the top of the city walls:

- For breathtaking views, both inside and outside the walls.
- To inspect the defensive walls and forts - one of the best preserved fortifications in Europe.
- To “experience” the Old Town in a unique way.

**NOTE:** The walk can be strenuous. The full length of the walls is 1940 meters (1.2 miles). During the process, you will walk up and down 25 meters (75 feet). You don't have to walk the full length of the walls. You can walk a section of it.

Some ship excursions include walking two sections of the walls. The tour starts by walking stairs up to the wall at St Luke's Church near the Dominican Monastery. In 30 minutes, the group arrives at St John's Fortress to visit the Maritime Museum. Then the tour goes back up the wall and heads West for 30 minutes exiting near the Pile Gate at St Savior Church, next to the Franciscan Monastery. You can walk the walls on your own. A guide could be helpful to explain the walls, forts, point out special sites, and cover the history of the site. You can arrange for a private tour guide to walk with your group.

The entrance fee to walk the walls is 70 kunas. Other currencies are NOT accepted.

This website has an excellent review of the walls with good photos. Whether or not you walk the walls, be sure to visit this website to help orient your visit to Dubrovnik. There are photos of Ploce and Pile Gates and detailed information on the Forts.  

Here's a tip on using the “official” website. Scroll down the opening screen to the section titled “Map” (as shown below):

Let's assume you wish to visit a museum. Click on the box titled “Museums: under “Guide”. The following screen appears listing 19 museums:
Click on one of the museums such as the “Franciscan Monastery Museum”.
A text box pops up pointing to the location on the map. The box also contains:

- A link to the “Franciscan Monastery Museum”. Click on the link to see a brief description of the museum, the open hours, and price of admission.
- The text box also contains the street address and phone number.
- The website for the museum (if there is one). Click on the [www.malabraca.hr](http://www.malabraca.hr) website to learn more such as the history of the museum, its contents, see photos, etc.

The “map function” of the Tourist Board Website [http://www.tzdubrovnik.hr/eng/](http://www.tzdubrovnik.hr/eng/) is easy to use. With only 4 mouse clicks, we've found links to the information we need for the Franciscan Monastery Museum. Be sure to check out other categories of information using the “map” function. I recommend viewing the categories of Transport, Churches, Monuments and Culture.

The website has a “Multimedia” section at this link [http://www.tzdubrovnik.hr/eng/multimedija.php](http://www.tzdubrovnik.hr/eng/multimedija.php)
You can download brochures as pdf files and detailed, high resolution maps.

Use this link [http://www.tzdubrovnik.hr/pdfs/TZ%20Grad_plan%20grada_stari%20grad.jpg](http://www.tzdubrovnik.hr/pdfs/TZ%20Grad_plan%20grada_stari%20grad.jpg) to download the Old Town Map on the next page and click on “file Save as” to save it to your computer.
Old Town Dubrovnik Map - download from http://www.tzdubrovnik.hr/pdfs/TZ%20Grad_plan%20grada_stari%20grad.jpg

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Google Map Coordinates for Dubrovnik Sites

Use these coordinates to find sites in Google Maps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Coordinates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Port Gruz – Cruise ship docks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pile Gate – Western entrance to Old Town</td>
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<tr>
<td>Franciscan Monastery tower - near Pile Gate</td>
<td>42.641642,18.107963</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clock Tower - Eastern end of Old Town next to dock</td>
<td>42.640908,18.110581</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dock in Old Town Harbor for tenders from ships</td>
<td>42.64096,18.111316</td>
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<tr>
<td>St John's Fortress, Maritime Museum, Aquarium</td>
<td>42.639894,18.112464</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ploce Gate - Northeast entrance to Old Town</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dominican Monastery near Ploce Gate</td>
<td>42.641713,18.111305</td>
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</table>

Cavat

It's 16 Km and a 22 minute ride from Old Town to Cavat. We took the ship's bus excursion. The Adriatic coastline is attractive and Croatia is a beautiful country. We walked around to explore the town. Local merchants were anxious to sell us souvenirs, food, ice cream, etc. and were willing to take Euros. I bought an ice cream cone and walked around the harbor. It is an attractive site, but I didn't find much to do there.

You can get a ferry boat from Old Town to Cavat, but I have no experience with that.

Cavat Harbor (photo below)
Photos of Cavat (below)
**User Feedback Is Welcome**

**Goal**
My guides are designed to help you plan a great cruise vacation by providing information such as where the ship docks, location of tourist sites, public transit, walking tour maps, things to see and do, travel issues unique to the port, etc. Knowledge of ports is important when planning shore excursions because you have to make many decisions and commitments long before your ship docks. I believe the information in this guide is accurate, however you are responsible to verify accuracy of the information that you use to plan your vacation.

Information on cruise ports frequently changes such as bus routes, admission fees to sites, rental car locations, etc. Cruise Critic is the best source for up-to-date, detailed information on travel details for shore excursions, reviews of cruise ships, etc. There are many knowledgeable people on Cruise Critic who are willing to share their expertise and travel experience. I highly recommend [www.CruiseCritic.com](http://www.cruisecritic.com); it's free to join.

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Fortunately, a friend of mine on that ship complained to the purser and the ship stopped violating my copyright.

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*Tom Sheridan*