
Island of Korcula

The island of Korčula belongs to the county of Dubrovnik-Neretva, and with its 276 km² is the 6th biggest island in the Adriatic. It is also one of the most populated islands of Dalmatia with its around 18 000 inhabitants. The oldest name for the island is "Korkyra Melania", meaning "Black Korčula" - probably "black" because of the dark pine forest whose trees served as the main material for shipbuilding. The eastern side of the island is 1270 m away from mainland, while the western side spreads towards the open sea. A narrow channel (20 km long, 1.5 km wide) divides the island from the Pelješac peninsula. The northern side of the island is low and accessible with several protected ports: Korčula, Vrbovica, Babina, Banja, Račine. The southern side of the island more indented than others, but in some places it is steep with its high rocks. In the area there are many anchorages and bays protected from the northern wind like: Prižba, Zavalatica, Rasohatica, Orlandua, and the Brna bay which is protected from the southern wind. The best protected bay, and simultaneously the biggest bay is that of Vela Luka on the western side of the island. There are also about 50 smaller islands near the coast of Korčula. Medicinal and aromatic plants (rosemary, mint and sage) can be found on the island, as well as different types of palms, eucalyptus, oleander, bougainvillea, cactus... Korčula is an extremely hilly island (almost 90 per cent of it), and 60 per cent of its surface is covered by pine forest and macchia. The highest peak is Klupca (569 m), situated in the centre of the island, then Gradina (554 m) and Kom (510 m). Korčula attracts tourists with its natural beauty, beautiful bays and islets, gravel and sandy beaches, crystal clear sea, cultural and historical events and its mild climate (2 700 sunny hours per year) that are perfect for vacation on the island throughout the whole year. Tourism is very developed on the island, but so are olive-growing, viticulture, seamanship, shipbuilding, stone-masonry. The island was inhabited in prehistory, which is confirmed by the findings of stone knives from the Neolithic period on the islet of Badija near Korčula. The most famous and most valuable Neolithic find is the Vela spilja situated on the slope of the hill named Pinski rat, which is famous for its beauty but also due to the fact that the cave is one of the most important Mediterranean archaeological sites. The island is daily connected with the mainland by boat, ferry and catamaran. The most beautiful place on the island is the town of Korčula, which is, according to legend, the birth place of Marco Polo. There are many activities available on the island: bicycle riding in nature, kayaking, sea exploring with professional divers, climbing, yacht sailing, tennis, different sea sports. There is also a rich gastronomic offer, top seafood specialties, and especially the first-rate white wines are famous (Pošip, Rukatac, Grk, Plavac). Three largest places on the island are: the mentioned town of Korčula, which is a tourist, cultural and economical centre of the island; Blato, in the interior, is famous for its dance with swords called Kumpanija (it is performed every year on the April 23rd in the town square on the high day of St. Vicenza, the patron-saint); and the little port town of Vela Luka on the western side of the island. Some other popular tourist destinations are Žrnovo, Račine, Pupnat, Ćara, Prižba i Smokvica.