



# Where the WINDS Take Me

*By Justin Wideman*

A photo journal of the Croatian tourist experience.  
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the sea. It is a world far removed from my American roots—a world where time and beauty are magically woven together.



fore them. My mind drifts farther south. I take in Krk Island's forests, rugged hilltops and beautiful valleys. I navigate narrow bridges and pass through villages that pinch the road to little more than two car's width. The sea-coast comes into

but not before putting on a lightshow over the city of Senj, down the coast to the south, and Velebit, the mountainous range that follows me. The strong winds—*bura*, as they are called here—persist, but they are so warm and embracing that no one seems to mind. An elderly Dutch couple gets deck chairs from their motor home for front row seats. Some French Rasta types beam me broad smiles as they pile out of their ambulance-turned-camper. We all take in the surround sounds and sights—nature's might and magnificence in concert. What on earth could bring such diverse people together to share such beautiful moments? Four and half million lucky people call it home. The rest of us call it Croatia.



Standing near the edge, I find a foothold on the uneven rocks. A storm rumbles in the distance, and the wind sweeps around me. Gulls glide past, relaxed and carefree. Their ride is compliments of the updraft—and what a ride it is!

My mind sails on, to a road that is so desolate I wonder if the auto camp I am looking for can possibly be ahead. A short distance from the medieval town of Krk, with its maroon colored awnings, I find myself in yet another world where time, harsh weather and little else have left their mark. It might just as well be a rally course on the moon. Nature has carved every rock into its unique shape, creating a 3D Impressionist-like masterpiece that fades effortlessly into the sea far below.

view, and life imitates art. What looks like a papier-mâché model of mountains, islands and sea is actually the real thing. I wind my way down to the bay and the charming town of Baška, where everything from the beach balls to bow-tied waiters in the upscale beachside restaurants seems to exist solely for the purpose of serving up the sort of relaxation and enjoyment that turn vacation dreams into realities—and then some.

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My thoughts take flight too, back to the docks of Selce, where I am once again photographing small boats at sunset, then the moon until it too disappears below the horizon. Across the strait, near the Krk Island town of Vrbnik, I watch scuba guides lead nighttime tours that light up patches of



I want to capture the moment in photos, so I pull over onto a small shoulder at the top and park. I am not the first to find this treasure; some Slovenian visitors have brought a picnic dinner, but the food sits untouched while they feast on the spread nature has set be-

A flash of lightning in the distance brings my mind back to the present. My feet are still right were my mind left them, perched on one of the cliffs of Povile. The storm passes,

