

## Ulcinj Riviera

The southernmost part of the Montenegrin coast, the Ulcinj Riviera, with fertile land and a favourable climate and over 20 kilometres of beaches with unique sand structure

, in its old part, like a huge museum, keeps the remains of Roman architecture, Byzantine restoration, Franciscan church, memories of the ruling of Angevin ladies, a tower and a tomb of Zeta ruler, then Venetian fortifications and rich oriental architecture created over a period of four centuries under Turkish rule.

Along the coastline of Ulcinj area, apart from sandy island of Ada that was formed at the mouth of Bojana River into the sea, and Velika plaza, the longest and the most beautiful beaches at the Montenegrin coast, there are also others further towards northwest: Valdanos, Mala plaza, Zenska plaza, Vucja jama, Kruce bay etc. Apart from Bojana River, the largest river in the coastal region of Montenegro, there are also fresh waters springs, sources of mineral water and other hydrographical features giving this area its beauty, offering water with healing qualities and providing for water supply.

The climate of Ulcinj area has all the positive features of the Mediterranean climate, and compared to the remaining part of the coastal region of Montenegro, it has much less precipitation, and more hours of sunshine. Swimming season here lasts for seven months (April to October), and in the span of a single day, swimming is possible from 7 AM to 9PM. Ulcinj costal zone, apart from large areas with olives and other diverse Mediterranean cultures, is also known for game hunting grounds (Stoj), and fishing at Bojana River, the lakes (Sasko and Zoganjsko) and at the sea.

Valdanos Beach and its surroundings is a real reserve of olives. It is covered with large pebbles and slightly curved. Here there is a tourist settlement with bungalows scattered under the olive trees and several restaurants. There is also a small camping ground. The beach is 400m long, ending on both sides in rocky bottom, ideal for fishing, snorkelling and scuba diving. The sea is clear, dark green of colour. The winds in the cove make it suitable for sailing.

Mala plaza (Small beach) is a town beach covered in finest sand of high quality, giving the sea here its greenish-bluish colour. This beach is characterised by shallow water stretching long way off into the sea. Because of that and the fine sand, it is very well suited for children. Mala plaza is 360m long and has the capacity of about 2,500 people. At the very end of the beach, below the Old Town, whose walls seem to rise from the sea, there is a small port (360 m) with nice berths. To the back of it there are restaurants, beer houses, cafes, and towards inland, built in the Mediterranean-Oriental style, the town of Ulcinj, this southernmost point of the coast of Montenegro. Along the pinewood, between hotels „Galeb" and „Albatros", there is a series of smaller, natural and hotel beaches of the total length of 1km: Skalice, Borici, Ludvigova plaza, Zenska plaza... After them there continues a series of pebble and rocky beaches for those looking for a secluded and peaceful nook, in perfect natural surroundings: Maslinjak, Opaljice, Dzemilina plaza, Ljana, Crnogorsko guvno. These beaches face the sea particularly suitable for underwater fishing. Zenska plaza (Women's Beach) is located in the wonderful centuries-old ; pinewood, in the immediate vicinity of hotels „Galeb" and „Albatros". At the beach i there is a source of healing sulphurous mineral water claimed to be miraculous; sup- j posedly this mineral water is beneficial for women with fertility problems, and thanks i to its beneficial effects many women became mothers.

Velika plaza (Large Beach) is a natural; phenomenon of beauty and abundance. It is 5 km away from Ulcinj, some 13 km long, 60m wide on average, and the local people call it Ulcinj Copacabana. It stretches from Djeran cape to Ada Bojana. It is covered by finest sand (particle size 0.1-5 mm), and it is estimated that it can accommodate some 150,000 people. The sand is of such quality that it is presumed to be healing, since it is rich in minerals and is recommended to people suffering from rheumatism and other diseases. Velika plaza is characterised by extremely long shallow belt of water. In the immediate vicinity of the beach, in the greenery of sub-tropical and Mediterranean plants, some 100 metres away from the sea, there is a hotel complex with sport facilities for tennis, football, basketball, volleyball, handball. Next to Djerana Cape, at the very beginning of Velika plaza, there is a marina called „Porto Milena", deeply cutting into the land, with a number of houses on water used for fishing in the traditional manner, called kalimera by the local people. At the beach there are rentals of sport equipment. Here you may surf, windsurf, ski, play football or volleyball on sand... Sport fishing is also very popular. Many fishermen are after the trophy, the fish called leer-fish.

Ada Bojana is seen by many as the reserve of the national park type. It is a river island, at the very end of Velika plaza, at the spot where Bojana River separates from it. This is actually an artificial island. Following some bad weather, in the middle of 19th century, the ship called „Merito" went aground here. At the spot there used to be two small islands. With years, river sediments were gathering around the wreck and the two islands, creating first a

sandbank, and then the whole island. Rising out of the water, the island divided the river into two branches. It is of triangular shape, washed on two sides by Bojana River and on the third side by the Adriatic Sea; on this side there is a 2,880-metre long beach that may accommodate some 13,000 swimmers. The right-hand branch of Bojana River separates the island from Velika plaza. The beach and the sea bottom are covered by fine sand. At the beach there are sunshades made of reed and twigs. Ada is most beautiful during the sunset, creating an incredible game of colours created by the sea, the sand and the sky merging them into a unique picture. It is a real paradise for windsurfing, surfing, water skiing, horseback riding on the beach, for Robinsons and people in love... It is a favourite destination of nudists from Germany.

The shores washed by Bojana are famous for their wooden houses, used by the local population to fish in the traditional way, highly specific for this area, and you may taste the catch in one of the fish restaurants built in this attractive environment. The island of Ada Bojana is covered both in sub-tropical and Mediterranean plants, some of the animal and plant species here being endemic. This dense and lush vegetation made people call Ada „Amazonian Tsar" and together with specific fauna turns this into a peculiar micro-ecological environment. For the lovers of elite sports it is good to know that Ada Bojana is an exclusive spot for windsurfing, since good winds create very favourable waves enabling windsurfing in Hawaiian style. At Ada Bojana there is a windsurfing school having top state-of-the-art equipment. The possibilities offered by Ada Bojana satisfy both the amateurs and high standards of professionals. The beginners find the flat line of the water in the lake where they learn the first steps in this sport very useful. Seven-day training with qualified instructors already enables you to enjoy the waves, and after a month of training or so you are ready for the waves in the open sea. As of 1975 a horseback riding school has been operating at Ada Bojana.

Here we end our little walk along the coast of Montenegro in words and pictures, but there starts your personal experience of the coast. We are assured that your experience will by far surpass the impressions about the coastal regions that we inspired by this Guide. We look forward to that, since that is the ultimate goal of this guide, namely to encourage you to visit the coast of Montenegro and let yourself enjoy all the things it offers.