



## Korcula island, CROATIA

マルコ・ポーロ生誕伝説のある島

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Off the coast of Croatia in the Adriatic Sea, Korcula island (pronounced *korchula*) is the country's sixth-largest isle and boasts the second-largest island population. Korcula is graced with **dense** forests. The rest of the landscape is adorned with olive groves and vineyards that produce its famed *posip* wine and make up a traditional source of livelihood for its inhabitants. Situated halfway between Split to the north and Dubrovnik to the south, Korcula is a great base for exploring Croatia and its **archipelago**.

After reaching the island by ferry, I felt lucky to stay at the historic Hotel Korcula. During the 18th century, the building was a cafe. In 1912 when the second floor was added, it became the first hotel on the island and it has remained one ever since. Many notable figures, including Yugoslavian presidents and celebrities such as the actress Sofia

Loren, have stayed at this hotel. But I was particularly touched when I learned that Jacqueline Kennedy, wife of the late U.S. President John F. Kennedy, had visited in 1964.

"The year after her husband's assassination, she came here to rest during the summer," said Ivana Radovanovic, the hotel director. I imagined Jackie sitting here in the same iconic cafe where we were having this talk.

The view of Korcula's waterfront from my balcony was beautiful; the sea was calm, and the fishing harbor was quiet after all the morning activity. After resting for some time in my vintage, belle époque room, I met Stanka Amadeo, a professional tour guide, who accompanied me on a visit to the old town. Fortunately, the earlier rain had stopped, and it was only cloudy.

The first thing I noticed was that much of Korcula's old city was built with Croatian **limestone**. The walls, streets and buildings were all creamy-white, giving an elegant look to the town. As Stanka explained, some walls and towers date back to the 15th century, and

during that time **dilapidated** buildings were banned and inhabitants were forced to repair their houses within a year of any damage to the stone. If they did not, the city council would give ownership of the building to someone else, Stanka told me, much to my surprise.

During our stroll, I noticed many restaurants and shops named after Marco Polo, the first European

explorer who had traveled as far as China and left a detailed chronicle of his experiences. Many Korculans claim he was from their island, and not Venice, as is widely believed. Polo is a common Korculan family name, and there is historical data that connects him with the island. And to top it all, at that time, Korcula was part of the Republic of Venice, Stanka said.

But historians have only **verified**







one fact connecting Marco Polo to Korcula; it is known that he was captured near the island during a battle between Venetian and Genoese naval forces and was imprisoned here before being transferred to the Genoese prison where he dictated the book that made him famous. Whether he was of Venetian or Korculan origin remains a mystery, but in any case, it was nice to imagine as I walked around the town.

#### 現地特産メニューに舌鼓

Following Stanka's advice, for dinner I ordered *zrnovski makaruni*, a traditional pasta dish



from the island. The tubular handmade pasta came with a thick, rich meat and tomato sauce. After a long day of walking, this delicious meal was the perfect way to end the day.

The next morning, I got up early to take in the sunrise from the balcony and watched the village wake up as the first sunlight

touched the bay. I was going to Cara in the interior of the island to enjoy a wine tasting. On my way there, I stopped on a hill overlooking the old town to admire the stunning view. I could easily recognize some of the walls and towers around the town that gave it its medieval appearance.

Since 1967, posip white wines from the Cara and Smokvica areas have held a denomination of origin, which is a designation that protects geographical status and refers to products specific to a particular region. The location for my wine tasting was in beautiful countryside overlooking the Nerica vineyards on this island that has been producing wine for centuries. I tried a posip white wine, which is made from the island's native posip grape, and also a mindel, another variety.

After my first sip of delicious posip wine, I understood why it received a gold medal in 2018.

On my way back, as I drove the winding coastline and watched islands appear on the horizon, I dreamed of all the places I still wanted to visit in Croatia. Definitely Korcula is the perfect base for all the trips to come.

**dense**  
密集した  
**archipelago**  
群島  
**limestone**  
石灰石

**dilapidated**  
破損した、荒廃した  
**verify(-ied)**  
(調査など)が事実であることを証明した



今回の筆者が訪れたのは、アドリア海に浮かぶクロアチアのコルチュラ島です。アドリア海は、イタリア半島とバルカン半島に挟まれた地中海の海域の一つ。この島は、ドロブニクとスプリトの間にあるペリエシャツ半島の先端部分に沿う形に並んでいます。国内に1千ほどある島のうち、面積・人口規模単位でかなり大きな島です。

筆者が泊まった港近くのホテルは、女優ソフィア・ローレンや彫刻家ヘンリー・ムーアなど内外の著名人が宿泊した伝統のあるホテルです。1964年には、前年に暗殺でジョン・F・ケネディ大統領を亡くしたジャクリン夫人が訪れています。

ガイドとともに向かったのが、旧市街。全長200メートル程度の地域に、市博物館、聖マルコ大聖堂、マルコ・ポーロの塔など歴史的建築物が集中しています。ご存じの通り、「東方見聞録」で知られるベネチア人（現在イタリア）マルコ・ポーロは、日本を「ジパング」と欧州に紹介した商人であり冒険家です。出身地については諸説ありますが、この島ではこの塔が彼の生家であるとしています。

「ポーロ」はコルチュラ島によくある姓で、この地帯がかつてベネチア共和国の植民地だったことが根拠になっているようです。マルコ・ポーロは13世紀後半のベネチア共和国とジェノバ共和国の衝突の際に捕虜になり、この地に一時収監されました。この島との関わりについて、この部分は立証されていますが、出生地かどうかは謎のままです。後にマルコ・ポーロはジェノバの監獄に移され、「東方見聞録」を口述することになります。

この島は、観光の他にワインやオリーブが名産です。土着品種「ポシップ」を使った白ワインは世界的にも高い評価を得ているようです。ポシップワインは日本でも手に入ります。筆者が現地の景色を目にしながらかんだワインの味にはとてもかなわないでしょうが、近く初めてのクロアチアワインを試してみたいと思います。（ハ）



1. 中世に生きている錯覚を起こしそうなコルチュラの街並み
2. 旧市街にある博物館には、コルチュラ島に関わるものが展示されている
3. 旧市街にある全聖徒教会で見たレリーフ。近くにはイコン博物館がある
4. 筆者が宿泊した「ホテル・コルチュラ」。1912年の開業以来、多くの著名人が宿泊した
5. 管状のパスタを使った現地の料理
6. キャラ(Cara)で飲んだワイン。オリーブやチーズとともに
7. 石灰石で造られた塔や壁。15世紀の建築物だという
8. 旧市街では毎週、野菜や果実の市場が開かれている

■ 次回はWorld View「ロンドン 黒人のダンサーのためのバレエスクール」です

