

## Things to know and bring to Bolara

*We're looking forward to seeing you in Bolara soon! Here we've listed a few things we thought would be helpful to know before you come.*

### If you read nothing else, please read this

#### Toilets

Please don't put anything down the toilets except toilet paper – we have a biological septic tank in the garden, and it's really bad news for all of us if it gets blocked.

#### Shutters

Istria gets very hot in summer. The house has thick stone walls and lots of insulation, but no air conditioning: so it's very important to shut the shutters and windows in your bedroom in the daytime to keep the sun and hot air out, then open them at night to let in the cool air.

#### Food

Stone buildings in hot climates are good homes for insects, so please don't keep food in the bedrooms and please clean up well after cooking and eating – even a few crumbs attract lines of ants very quickly!

#### Bathrooms

You may be sharing one, so you might want to bring a dressing gown.

#### Checking in/out

Check-in is between 5pm and 11pm, and check-out is by 10am. This gives us the time we need to prepare rooms between guests.

## Weather

The climate's Mediterranean, as we're close to the sea, but it gets continental quickly if you go east or north from here (e.g. into Slovenia).

**Summer** weather can get very hot, particularly in July and August, so walking and sightseeing is best in early mornings and early evenings, while the middle of the day's better spent in the shade or the sea. It's mostly very dry, but when the occasional rainstorms come it gets quite muddy, so sensible footwear (and slippers for inside so dirty shoes are left in the porch) are good.

**Winter** days tend to be either clear and sunny or misty, but you'll need jumpers and coats at night either way. We have wood-fired central heating, and you may have a wood-burning stove in your room (ask for a demonstration!); however, stone floors can feel chilly so you might want some woolly socks and slippers (when it's wet we keep outdoor shoes in the porch).

## Things to bring

### Swimming gear, including sandals or rubber shoes

The coast here is rocky so it's worth having something to protect your feet (easy to buy here).

### Mosquito repellent

In summer the mosquitoes come out in the evening so bring long-sleeved tops and trousers and mosquito repellent (although we'd rather you avoid DEET). We have anti-mosquito plug-ins for the bedrooms and bathrooms.

### Walking shoes or boots

The paths are generally rocky so flip flops aren't great.

### Slippers

In the house, many of the floors are stone or tile, so it's more comfortable to wear slippers than bare feet. We have some spare pairs but you might want to bring your own.

## Essentials

### Dialling code for Croatia

+385

### Currency

The kuna ("pine marten", you'll see one on the 1kn coin). €1 is about 7.5kn.

### Electricity

Standard European 230V with round two-prong plugs.

### The emergency services number

112

## Medical services

Croatia is a member of the European Union so if you're an EU citizen your healthcare is covered; but make sure you bring an in-date EHIC card. There are hospitals in Pula and Rijeka, both of which are about an hour's drive from Bolara. There are smaller health centres in Umag (about 30 minutes' drive), Poreč (40 minutes) and Pazin (45 minutes). There are pharmacies in Buje, Novigrad and Motovun (each 20 minutes drive) – see the map on [www.bolara60.com/info](http://www.bolara60.com/info).

## Things to be wary of

### Snakes

You might well see a snake when you're out on a walk, especially in spring and summer. The majority are not dangerous: you're most likely to see long plain brown or black grass snakes, which are not venomous and will just slide away as soon as they can. However, there are a few types of venomous viper in Istria so you must be careful. The most dangerous is the poskok or horned viper, recognisable by a zigzag or diamond-shape pattern along its length and an upturned horn on its snout. They're not aggressive, but if surprised or provoked they can bite, and this is really serious: call the emergency services on 112 and keep the bite low down.

### Ticks

Ticks live in the long grass and attach themselves to people or animals walking through it, particularly in spring and early summer. They can carry diseases, so it's important to wear sensible clothing (ideally covering legs and arms) and check yourselves and pets thoroughly after going for a walk. If you find one, pull it out carefully with tweezers, making sure its jaws come out with it. Serious tick-borne diseases are very rare here, but the quicker you get rid of them the better.

### Scorpions

Outside wintertime you're almost certain to see a scorpion or two, and the good news is that they are really not dangerous (unless you happen to be allergic to them, which is a different matter). European scorpions are nothing like American or African scorpions: they can sting you, but it's less painful than a wasp sting, and doesn't last long. They're not aggressive: they're out to catch tiny flies. They love living in stone houses because they can hide in the cracks, so we do see them quite often. Either ignore them or squish them (we have a rubber mallet for the purpose by the front door, although a flip flop works just as well). If you take the squishing option, please clean the wall immediately with damp toilet paper, so as not to stain the plaster!

### Mosquitoes

In summer we get the usual Mediterranean insects, so bring something to wear which protects your arms and legs while sitting outside in the evening. Insect repellent is also useful, although please don't use DEET as it gets washed into our biological septic tank.