

Cravat' (from various sources)

A corruption of Crabat or Croät. It was introduced into France by some French officers on their return from Germany in 1636. The Croäts, who guarded the Turkish frontiers of Austria, and acted as scouts on the flanks of the army, wore linen round their necks, tied in front, and the officers wore muslin or silk. When France organised a regiment on the model of the Croäts, these linen neckcloths were imitated, and the regiment was called "The Royal Cravat."

By 1667 many Croatian soldiers were still on duty in France and the French command formed a hussar regiment for them. The regiment got that honorable name of Royal Cravattes. This regiment was one of the few elite hussar regiments who were dressed in royal blue colored uniforms. The Croats' uniform was generally gray similar to other 40 or so hussar regiments except that their jackets were of royal deep blue color. The Croats wore large handkerchiefs fixed in a peculiar way around their necks that the Parisians liked very much. This kerchief had come in fashion at the Royal court known as the "CRAVATTE".

The ROYAL CRAVATTES have been fighting under French command in many battles against the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy particularly after 1671. In the battle at Steenkerque 1692 the English had surprised the French in their camp. English army was close to the victory had not the French hussars without hesitation jumped onto their horses and repelled the attackers. The French hussars were mainly from the Royal Cravattes regiment who haven't had much time to properly knot their handkerchief before mounting their horses. With their flying kerchief around necks they entered the battle thus the French called it the "Cravatte la Steenkerque" afterwards.

The modern necktie spread by Europe traces back to the time of the [Thirty Years' War](#) (1618–1648) when [Croatian mercenaries](#) from the [Croatian Military Frontier](#) in French service, wearing their traditional small, knotted neckerchiefs, aroused the interest of the [Parisians](#).^[2] Because of the slight difference between the [Croatian](#) word for Croats, *Hrvati*, and the French word, *Croates*, the garment gained the name "cravat" ("[cravate](#)" in French).^[3] The boy-king [Louis XIV](#) began wearing a lace cravat about 1646, when he was seven, and set the fashion for French nobility. This new article of clothing started a fashion craze in Europe; both men and women wore pieces of fabric around their necks. From its introduction by the French king, men wore [lace cravats](#), or [jabots](#), that took a large amount of time and effort to arrange. These cravats were often tied in place by cravat strings, arranged neatly and tied in a bow.

International Necktie Day is celebrated on October 18 in Croatia and in various cities around the world, e.g. in [Dublin](#), [Tübingen](#), [Como](#), [Tokyo](#), [Sydney](#) and other towns.^{[4][5]}

The cravat originated in the 1630s. Like most men's fashions between the seventeenth century and [World War I](#), it was of military origin. In the reign of [Louis XIII of France](#), [Croatian mercenaries](#)^[4] were enlisted into a [regiment](#) supporting the king and [Cardinal Richelieu](#) against the [Duke of Guise](#) and the Queen Mother, [Marie de' Medici](#). The traditional Croat military kit aroused [Parisian](#) curiosity about the unusual, picturesque scarves distinctively knotted at the Croats' necks. The cloths that were used ranged from the coarse cloths of enlisted soldiers to the fine linens and [silks](#) of the officers. The sartorial word, [cravat](#), derives from the French [cravate](#), a variant of *Croate*.

[Croatia](#) celebrates Cravat Day on October 18.^[5]

Considering the interdependence of many European regions (particularly the French) with the [Venetian Republic](#), which at the time ruled much of the coastal area of modern Croatia, and the word's uncertain philologic origin, the new neckdress for men was known as a *cravate*. The French readily switched from old-fashioned starched linen ruffs to the new loose linen and muslin *cravates*. The military styles often had broad, laced edges, while a gentleman's cravat could be of fine lace. As an extreme example of the style, the sculptor [Grinling Gibbons](#) carved a realistic cravat in white limewood that is now on display at [Chatsworth House](#).

On returning to [England](#) from exile in 1660, [Charles II](#) imported with him the latest new word in fashion: "A cravatte is another kind of adornment for the neck being nothing else but a long towel put about the Collar, and so tyed before with a Bow Knott; this is the original of all such Wearings; but now by the Art and Inventions of the seamsters, there is so many new ways of making them, that it would be a task to name, much more to describe them".^[6]



Ivan Gundulic (1589-1638) with his cravat in 1622.
Source: [Acadmia Cravatica](#).

The earliest known usage of cravat in history is by [Ivan Gundulic](#) (1589-1638), a famous Croatian poet from the City of Dubrovnik. Note that Gundulic died the year when the French emperor Louis XIV was born.

Croatian soldiers served in many European armies since the seventeenth century. So in the French army in the 17th century, during the reign of Louis XIII, there was a cavalry composed exclusively of the Croats, called **Royal - Cravate**, which existed in the period of 1664-1789. These soldiers gave the world something that is today unavoidable in fashion: the **tie**, called **la cravate** by the French and by the Germans **die Krawatte** - the expression was coined from the Croatian name, and mentioned for the first time in 1651. The name entered also

- Italian - **Cravatta**
- Spanish - **Corbata**
- Filipino - **Korbata**
- Portuguese - **Gravata**
- Croatian - **Kravata**
- Irish - **Carabhat**
- Basque - **Gorbata**
- English - **Cravat**
- Welsh - **Crafat**
- Swedish - **Kravatt**
- Finnish - **Kravatti**
- Flemish - **Krawaat**
- Danish - **Kravata**
- Dutch - **Kravata**
- Norwegian - **Krawatt**
- Vietnamese - **Cà vạt, Cravat**
- Swedish - **Krawatt**
- Estonian - **Kravata**
- Greek - **Gravata, γραβάτα**
- Polish - **Krawat**
- Ukrainian - **Kravatka**
- Czech - **Kravata**
- Slovakian - **Kraváta**
- Slovenian - **Kravata**
- Albanian - **Kravatë**
- Romanian - **Cravată**
- Serbian - **Kravata**
- Turkish - **Kravat**
- Afrikaans - **Krawat**
- Galician - **Gravat**
- Malay - **Cravat**

and many other. So when you wear a *tie*, remember its Croatian origin.

Many variants of the Croatian name can be found in old documents (for more information see eg. [[Klaic](#), Hrvati i Hrvatska]):

*Hrvat, Horvat, Harvat, Chorvat, Charvat,
Crovat, Cravat (-> cravate), Crobot, Corbat, Krobat,
Charwath, Crawat, Krawat, Churbate, Grawat,
Charwaten, Corbetha, Curewate, Corwate,
Chrowat, Crowat, etc.*

In Italy one can encounter the second names of *Cravati, Cravatti, Cravetto, Cravedi, Craviotto, Croattimi, Croatto*, obviously all of them derived from the Croatian name. You can easily check this in Italian phone books.

The name of **HRVATA** for cravate can be heard in Croatia in the regions of [Lika](#) and in Ravni Kotari near Zadar. HRVATA is derived from the name of Hrvat = Croat.

It is interesting that in the Swedish capital Stockholm there is a district called **Krabaten**. It is a result of participation of Croats in the Thirty Year's War (17th century). In the Stockholm military museum there are several Croatian flags from that war. On the southern bank of lake Vänren in Sweden there is a beautiful palace of Läckö where you can see traditional Croatian, Dalmatian and Slavonian coats of arms (Austrian room, No 165), painted around 1680. By the way, it is interesting that Ban (viceroy) [Ivan VI Frankapan](#) lived for about seven years at the Royal Court in Sweden in the first half of the 15th century.



Monument of [Marko Marulic](#) of Split (1450-1524), a famous Croatian writer from 15th-16th centuries, decorated by a nice cravate. Carved by [Ivan Mestrovic](#) in 1924. Photo by Jelena Popic.

Here is an interesting message forwarded to me by mr. Tomislav Petricevic (Zagreb) in 2002, concerning the Swedish word *krabat*, that he obtained from one of his Swedish colleagues:

The word is [one] *krabat*, [many] *krabater*, and [that] *krabaten*, [those] *krabaterna*. The meaning of the word is a "small, active, alert child", nowadays usually exclusively referring to a little boy. It is indeed derived from the word Croat and has been used in the Swedish language since c. 1620, so your dating the word to the 30 years' war is correct. It arrived in our language via (low) German. The same word is used in the form [one] *kravatt*, [many] *kravatter*, for (neck)tie, although this is of somewhat later origin and came to the Swedish language around 1716 from the French cravate, a Croatian scarf, as used by the Croatian soldiers. I checked this information with the dictionary of the current edition of the Swedish Encyclopedia, of which I'm an editor.

A part of Vienna, capital of Austria, at Spittelberg (7. Bezirk), was since 1609 known as **Krawattendörfl** or **Krowottendörfl**, according to different Austrian dialects. It is interesting that Austrian general Isolano (Johann Ludwig Hektor Isolano, 17th century), had three houses there, and his troupes were composed of Croats that brought the cravate to the world. Many thanks to Mr. Mijo Juric, Vienna, for this information.

It is interesting that the Croatian town of Slavonski Brod on river Sava appears on a map of the Habsburg Empire from 1697 with its center indicated as [Cravatten Statt](#). The map was prepared by Nikola Sparr de Bendorf from the Netherlands, and is kept in the Military Archives in Vienna.

Baron Trenck (1711-1749) was probably the most famous Croatian soldier who took part in the war of the Austrian Succession. He was the head of a regiment of Pandours recruited largely in Slavonia. His *Memoirs of the Illustrious Francis Bacon Trenck* were first printed in German and then translated into English (London, 1747).

It is little known that a famous French King Louis XIV (1638-1715) had his *cravatier du roi*. Cravatier du roi had a very serious and important duty in the state administration: to offer the King a basket full of finest cravats every morning! See [\[Peroche\]](#), p. 121. The King himself wore cravate, [see here](#). Note that he was born the same year when [Ivan Gundulic](#) died.

Interesting impressions about the Croats can be seen in "The Journey" written by Thomas Watkins, published in London in 1792 (second edition in 1794). He praises Croatian soldiers (Esclavonian soldiers) and sailors. He was enthralled by the beauty of [Dubrovnik](#), its hospitality, competent administration, high level of education and scholarship found among many of its inhabitants. He also cited some of the verses that the Dubrovnik poets addressed to him as a guest. Talking about inhabitants of Dalmatia, he stated that they are ``in their attire and manners not unlike highland Scots - bold, honest, simple and so incured to inclement weather that even now, when the snow is 4 inches high, some of them (as I can see from my window) spend the night round a small fire in the open" (see [[Mardesic](#)], p. 186).



Cravate with pattern of [Croatian coat of arms](#), photo from croata.hr

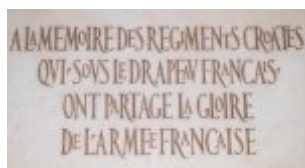
Two Croatian regiments of *Royal Cravate* were under the French flag in military operations undertaken by Napoleon I in Russia. Especially important was their insurance of Napoleon's retreat from Russia across Berezino in 1812/13. More than two thirds of the Croats lost their lives: 400 soldiers and 10 officers, plus 357 dead of famine and freezing. Only 296 survived. According to Marmont, Napoleon declared: ``I never had more courageous and better soldiers". According to [[Dolbeau](#)], p 18, Napoleon addressed the following message to these 296 Croatian survivors:

Hier, j'ai pu m'assurer de mes propres yeux de votre courage et de votre fidélité. Vous avez acquis la gloire immortelle et l'estime, et je vous place parmi mes meilleurs troupes. Pour votre courage, je vous promets de vous accorder tout ce que vous me demanderez de bon droit lorsque nous serons de retour. Je suis satisfait de vous, très satisfait.

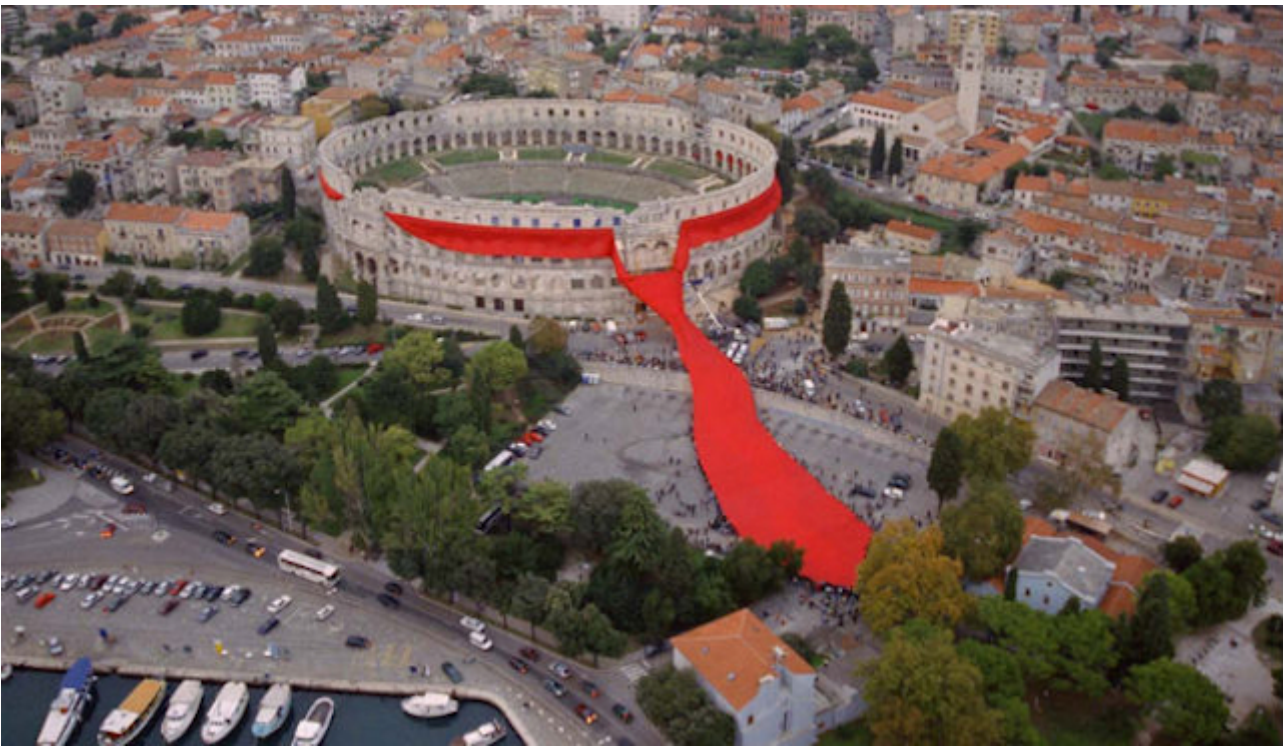
(Yesterday I was able to assure myself with my own eyes of your courage and your fidelity. You have acquired immortal glory and esteem, and I place you among my best troops. For your courage, I promise to grant you whatever you rightly ask of me when we return. I am satisfied with you, very satisfied.)

Demobilized in 1814, only several officers stayed in France, like the "fameux général" **Marko Sljivaric**, comte de Heldenburg (1762-1838), who became commander of the city of Antibes.

In the French Military Museum in Paris (Maison des Invalides) there is a memorial tablet containing the following words ("To the memory of Croatian regiments that under the French flag have shared the glory of the French Army"):



The historical tragedy of the Croats was that they had to fight against each other in opposing armies, like in French and Austrian army, Turkish, Venetian.



CRAVATE AROUND ARENA IN [PULA](#), 2003

the largest cravat in the world, weighing 450 kg, 808 m long, maximal width 25 m, tied around Arena in Pula, Istria, Croatia. The knot itself was tied at the height of 21 meters, and was 15 meters wide!



Cravate around the City Bell in [Dubrovnik](#), 2006