

# Holidaying with a monster hunter

**M**Y BOYFRIEND is prowling around the cool wooden floor of our hotel room, holding his iPhone in front of him. His data roaming is off so he needs to make the most of the patchy wi-fi within these four walls.

It's day two of our holiday in Dubrovnik but, rather than looking up the ferry schedule to the island of Lokrum or finding the best place to try local speciality 'dirty macaroni' (a mix of beef, macaroni and cheese), he's searching for a Charmander, a Pokémon species. Apparently there's one in here somewhere. He's stalking from the bed to the cupboard to the bathroom door and back again.

"There it is!" Reclined on the bed with a book, I peer over its pages at the screen he's holding in front of me. There, atop our crisp white bedsheet, is an orange cartoon baby dragon with a flaming tail, peering back at us.

My boyfriend springs into action and virtually lobs a Poké Ball at Charmander.

"Yesss!" He got him. But he has to catch 'em all and is already looking at the Google map of the Adriatic Sea. At least it's encouraging him to learn

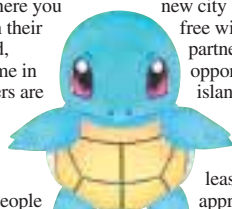
The Pokémon Go craze has brought a whole new thrill to finding wi-fi hotspots abroad, says **Rose Dykins**

something about the local area, I suppose.

The summer of Pokémon Go is well under way. Everywhere you go you'll see people with their smartphones outstretched, playing the Nintendo game in which Pokémon characters are superimposed on to real-life surroundings via augmented reality, ready to be caught.

The addiction is real. People have been running into the middle of motorways and let's not forget the stampede in Central Park, where there was actual shoving.

The struggle of Pokémon Go widows, like me, is also very real. I now have to compete even harder than before with my partner's smartphone for his attention. Still, at least he's not threatening to go 'full-time', like one New Zealander who reportedly quit his job to pursue his Poké passion.



**Caught you! A Squirtle, as found on the island of Lokrum**

Pokémon Go potentially means extremely high data bills if the urge takes over while you're exploring a new city but with the ubiquity of

free wi-fi my Poké addict of a partner still has plenty of opportunities to hunt. On the island of Lokrum (yes, we made it there), for example, he catches a Squirtle – which at least forces him to appreciate the carvings on the Gothic Renaissance column behind it.

One evening we dine at a swanky sushi restaurant facing Old Town Dubrovnik. I'm enjoying the warm sea breeze and golden evening light that makes the sandstone medieval walls behind us glow. We're both a little tipsy.

He looks at me, and leans in close. "Rose," he whispers.

"What?" I reply.

"Don't move. There's a Pidgeotto on your plate."



**On the trail:** It seems no tourist spot is now free from Pokémon players PICTURE: AP



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