

ADRIATIC ADVENTURE

DETAILED ITINERARY

SLOVENIA & CROATIA
ITALY, BOSNIA & MONTENEGRO

Apr 23/24



Lake Bohinj

Journey to one of the most diverse regions of Europe - Croatia and Slovenia. Our adventure begins in Dubrovnik, Croatia. We will visit seaside towns with roots from the Middle Ages, and even as far back as Roman times. Relive history during the walk along the medieval walls of Dubrovnik, a fascinating and fabled city also known as the “Pearl of the Adriatic”, and enjoy the magnificent landscape, culture, cuisine and hospitality of the locals.

Our trip to the Adriatic Coast, Bosnia and Montenegro is a relaxing blend of walks and hikes to natural wonders and historic sites. Journey with us to the least crowded, and perhaps the most impressive, seacoasts of Europe.

If you are a nature lover the diversity of the parks we visit will surely fascinate you, including the world-famous Plitvice and Krka National Parks, with their impressive falls. Breathe the fresh mountain air of the Slovenian Alps and take in the unforgettable blue color of the Adriatic Sea.

FACTS & HIGHLIGHTS

- 19 land days • Maximum 12 travelers • Start in Dubrovnik, Croatia and finish in Ljubljana, Slovenia
- All meals included • Visit 9 UNESCO World Heritage Sites • Explore 9 national parks • Explore the fabled city of Dubrovnik • Mostar Bridge and Kotor Bay • Sarajevo, Bosnia’s Capital City • Enjoy a boat cruise on the Krka River
- Visit the Roman Amphitheater in Pula • Savor Italy’s Trieste • Explore Postojna and Skocjan Caves • Hike in Slovenian Alps

DEPARTURE DATES & PRICE

Oct 01 - Oct 20, 2024 - \$7995 USD

Oct 22 - Nov 10, 2024 - \$7995 USD

Activity Level: 3

Comfort Level: 4 days with long drives. • Some high viewpoints. Caution for those suffering from vertigo or fear of heights • Some crossings on wooden platforms and bridges to waterfall and lake view points • Some slippery (due to weather) and uneven terrains (tree roots, rocks etc.). Walking sticks will be provided for these hikes. • One dry riverbed crossing

ACCOMMODATIONS

Comfortable accommodations with private bathrooms.

ELDERTREKS



SMALL GROUP
EXOTIC ADVENTURES
FOR TRAVELERS 50 PLUS

Explore two fantastic caves, Postojna, and Skocjan (UNESCO), with fascinating animals, stalactites, stalagmites, including unique and giant underground rivers and lakes.

DAY 1 ARRIVE IN DUBROVNIK, CROATIA

Welcome to Croatia! Upon arrival in Croatia, you will be met at the airport and transferred to our hotel. The town of Mlini is a charming little fishing town located 12km outside of Dubrovnik, making it a perfect and relaxing base for sightseeing.

Overnight in Mlini.

DAY 2 DUBROVNIK SIGHTSEEING

This morning we visit the fabled city of Dubrovnik. Its motto is “Libertas” (liberty), because for several centuries the city-state of Dubrovnik (the so-called Ragusa) managed to preserve its independence while the coast fell under the sway of foreign powers. At its 16th-century height, the republic had the third largest merchant fleet in the world. Only a few will notice any remaining signs of the 1991-1992 siege, during which over 2000 enemy shells fell on the old city. Reconstruction was undertaken with astonishing speed and the old town again resembles its former self.

We walk along the main street to Luza Square, original to the medieval town, where St. Blaise’s Church and Orlando’s Column stand. The marble-paved squares, steps, and streets are lined with numerous, finely carved fountains, palaces, churches, and monasteries.

After lunch in the Old Town, the afternoon is free to explore on your own. You can spend your time visiting some of the many museums to get a more insider’s view about the medieval life of the Republic of Ragusa, as Dubrovnik was called that time (Rectors’ Palace, the Ethnographic and Maritime Museum are highly



Bled Castle



Postojna Cave.



recommended). Enjoy a stroll around the Old Town (Placa), walk the city wall, ride the funicular for a great vista, visit one of the many beautiful beaches, or visit some of Dubrovnik's incredible art galleries. The city is yours to discover!

Overnight in Mlini.

DAY 3 PANORAMIC DRIVE THROUGH MONTENEGRO: KOTOR, KOTOR FJORD, BUDVA

Today is a long, exciting day! We leave our hotel early and cross the border into Montenegro to the beautiful coastal town of Kotor, tucked in the embrace of high mountains, bent over a deep bay (southern most fjord of Europe!) of the Mediterranean Sea. The beauty of Kotor Bay has been praised many times in verse. After a guided tour of Kotor, we drive to the mountains above the fjord, to Mt. Lovcen National Park's highest passes, to look at one of the most magnificent landscapes of all Europe. Kotor Bay is on the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The high craggy peaks of the bay make this landscape unforgettable, especially on rainy days, when a myriad of colors reflect off of the sea.

We continue our visit in Montenegro on the coast where we can see the charming old town of Budva from a nice lookout vista. We make a stop near Njegos, and sample the finest ham from a local family who has been producing and selling products since 1886. After a long and busy day in Montenegro, one of the hidden pearls of the Adriatic and the smallest State of the former Yugoslavia, we return to Croatia.

Overnight in Mlini.

DAY 4 HIKE ON LOKRUM ISLAND, TRSTENO PLANE TREES, STON

This morning we will travel by local ferry to Lokrum Island Nature Reserve. One of the many Adriatic islands along the coast, it lies about 700 meters from the mainland. The island is covered with laurel, oak, pine and cypress trees as well as olives, agaves, cacti, magnolia and palms. In 1959 a botanical garden was founded, including a small salt lake. Our walk takes us past a deserted Benedictine monastery founded in 1023. We can climb to the fortress lookout tower for a spectacular view of the old city of Dubrovnik. After lunch we say good-bye to the island's resident peacocks, and take a 30 minute ferry ride back to Dubrovnik.

We continue our drive towards Bosnia. We stop enroute at the gates of the Trsteno Arboretum to get to see two giant plane trees (*Platanus orientalis*), considered to be among the oldest in all of Europe - over 500 years, with trunks over 5 meters (16 feet) in diameter!

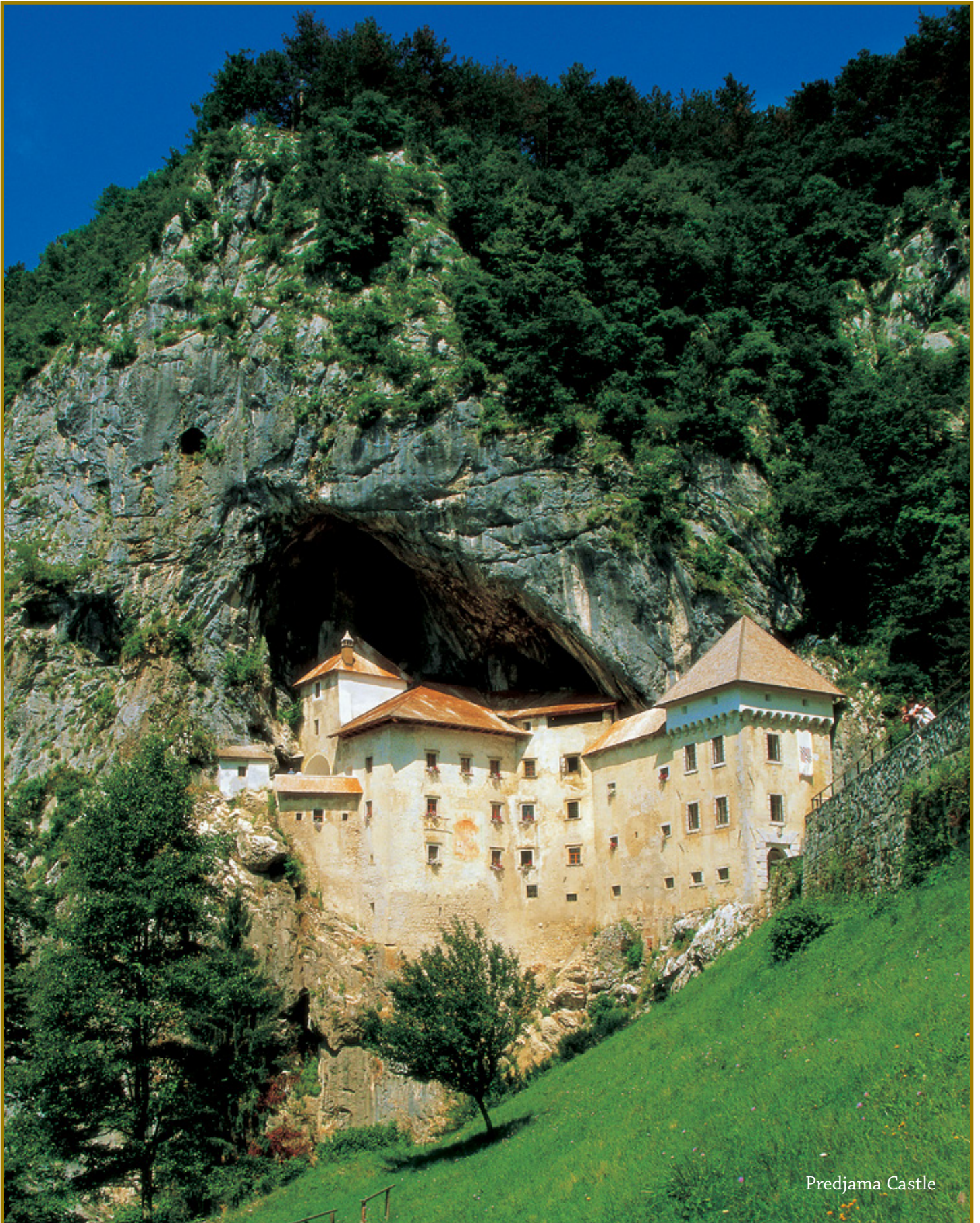
We also will stop shortly at Ston. This is a coastal town that dates back to Roman times, and is known for its natural salt production and enormous city wall, the second longest after the Chinese Great Wall. We will see part of the 3-mile stone wall originally built to protect the salt works, whose product was known as "white gold".

After crossing the border to Bosnia we will drive to Mostar and have dinner overlooking the magnificent Neretva River with its famous Old Bridge, and mosques in the background.

Overnight in Mostar.

DAY 5 SARAJEVO

Driving through mountainous central Bosnia-Herzegovina to the capital, Sarajevo, we find one of the most Oriental cities in Europe. Here, amongst the minarets and the Bascarsija market, we can find



Predjama Castle

the true Turkish coffee. Our tour will show us the city's multicultural religions, cultural make up and the hope of the city in its post war revitalization. We also visit the spot where Franz Ferdinand was killed, a historically important event in starting WW1. We return to Mostar for dinner and overnight.

Overnight in Mostar.

DAY 6 BOSNIA: MOSTAR SIGHTSEEING, BLAGAJ MONASTERY

After breakfast we set out to enjoy the magnificent city of Mostar, the unofficial capital of Herzegovina, in the southern region of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Old Town is entered through its famous stone arch, "Stari Most", a bridge binding two banks of the emerald Neretva River. This is a city of heroism and poetry and composed of narrow, winding streets. Here we will visit the Old Bridge, a Turkish house, and a mosque, as we learn about the cities Muslim heritage.

After lunch, we have an option to take a break, or visit Blagaj Monastery, built in 1520 for the dervish cult, situated in a beautiful setting near a strong karst spring. Blagaj village still retained its oriental-settlement character, and is decorated with a massive fortress wall from the medieval times.

Overnight in Mostar.

DAY 7 CROATIA: IMOTSKI SINKHOLES, SPLIT SIGHTSEEING

After breakfast, we drive back to Croatia. Enroute, we stop at two rarely visited, enormous sinkholes of Imotski, with deep lakes on their bottoms. Both of these lakes were created by water erosion of the underground channels and caves. Earthquakes have further contributed to the current shapes, even though the region is not tectonically active.

Modro Jezero (Blue Lake) has a shape like a kidney. It is

800 meters long and 250-400 meters wide. The maximum water level is 107 meters, when it starts overflowing on the south side.

Crveno Jezero (Red Lake), is one of the deepest lakes in the world. Its north side is 250 meters high, with 280 meters of water below. The precise depth of the lake is not known due to its complex connected water reservoirs. There were several expeditions in recent years making lots of progress, but not providing any definite answer. The bottom of the lake is just 4 meters above sea level.

We continue onwards to Split, which is the largest Croatian city on the Adriatic Coast. Split made its mark on the map in the 4th century, when Roman Emperor Diocletian had his retirement palace built here. Diocletian's Palace is one of the most imposing Roman ruins in the world. More a fortress than a palace, it contained the imperial residence, temples and a mausoleum. We will see the vestibule of the original palace, the fortress' colonnaded square, the Temple of Jupiter and the remains of Diocletian's Mausoleum, now a cathedral. In this part of the old town, everyday life bustles along in an open-air museum setting.

Overnight in Skradin.

DAY 8 BOAT CRUISE TO VISOVAC ISLAND, KRKA FALLS, TORAK SPRING

This morning, enjoy a 1-hour boat trip on the Krka River to Visovac Island. Here we have a short-guided tour of the Franciscan Monastery. After our return boat trip, we walk throughout the national park to see hundreds of beautiful small waterfalls, deep in the river gorge. This area was declared to be a national park in 1985, primarily for its several rapids and cascades, also preserving one of the most valuable freshwater ecosystems of the country. A short drive

through the countryside brings us to a great location at the top of a 100 meter (656 foot) cliff overlooking the stunning valley with emerald green Torak Spring at the bottom of the canyon.

After lunch, you have free time to enjoy the picturesque town of Skradin, complete with cobblestone streets and a busy harbor.

Overnight in Skradin.

DAY 9 SIBENIK, ZADAR

After breakfast, we have a short drive to Sibenik. Here, we explore the sights, including the Gothic Renaissance St. Jacob's Cathedral, which is on the UNESCO World Heritage List, and the citadel on a top of a cliff.

We then make our way to the city of Zadar and enjoy a guided tour of this historical city. The Roman forum is well preserved and the Venetian walls still stand, as do ancient Croatian churches, monasteries and palaces. Zadar has always been outward looking

and has shared agriculture, shipbuilding, shipping and trade with people of the Mediterranean.

Overnight in Zadar.

DAY 10 PAKLENICA GORGES NATIONAL PARK

In 1978, the area of Paklenica National Park was put under the protection of the United Nations program "Man and the Biosphere". With its two monumental canyons, the second largest European preserve of Austrian fir, ancient beech forests and steep cliffs, this natural phenomenon is recognized as one of the most beautiful national parks of the northeast Mediterranean. Many species, particularly reptiles and birds, have been recorded here, including some rare and endangered species.

Overnight in Zadar.



DAY 11 PLITVICE LAKES NATIONAL PARK

Today we travel to Plitvice National Park. This day is one of our longest travel days, however we have several stops to enjoy the beautiful natural scenery.

We make our way to the Plitvice Waterfalls, located in a valley situated between high-forested mountains and surrounded by sixteen crystal clear blue-green lakes. The lakes are fed by many small streams and brooks which eventually form dramatic cascades and thundering waterfalls. Due to their unique evolution and beauty, in 1979 the Plitvice Lakes were entered in the UNESCO World Heritage List. The exceptional beauty of the lakes and waterfalls, rich plant and animal life, forests of incredibly contrasting colors and the pure mountain air attract nature lovers from all over the world.

Arriving in the evening into Lovran, located on the Adriatic Opatija Riviera, we check into our hotel where we stay for 3 nights.

Overnight in Lovran

DAY 12 HUM, MOSCENICE VILLAGE AND OIL MILLS

This morning we visit Hum, known locally as “the smallest town in the world”. This fortified hilltop town has a medieval bell tower which overlooks the picturesque valley. We will have time to explore Hum’s shops where we will find local brandies and paintings.

After lunch we visit Moscenice village. Moscenice boasts beautiful beaches, old romantic villas and a rich historical core, one perfect example of the many small lovely towns built on hilltops in the Istrian peninsula. This medieval town is full of charm, and is famous for not only its medieval architecture, but also for the single entrance into the city. All other sides the gorges precipitate deep into the sea. Here we explore the former fishing village and learn about the local oil mills and the traditions connected. Here we have an opportunity to sample some special local brandies and schnapps, which are made in area. We then return to Lovran where you have time to relax before dinner.

Overnight in Lovran.



DAY 13 ISTRIA PENINSULA: PULA, ROVINJ, POREC

Today we have a long and rewarding day exploring the Istria peninsula, an archipelago of 13 islands, offering incredible flora, fauna and beaches. First we travel to Pula, which is famous for its 1st century Roman amphitheater overlooking the harbor. We tour the ruins to see the limestone 30 meter high outer walls that could enclose 20,000 spectators. We wander through the Temple of Augustus to see the statue of James Joyce. We continue onward to Rovinj for lunch, a charming fishing town, followed by a guided tour to see St. Euphemia's Church, named after a martyr saint from the 6th century, which has a commanding hilltop location. Later in the afternoon, we visit Porec to see a 6th century A.D UNESCO World Heritage Site basilica and its Byzantine gold mosaics.

Overnight in Trieste.

DAY 14 TRIESTE SIGHTSEEING, SOCERB CASTLE, SKOCJAN CAVE

This morning we have a guided tour of Trieste. We will cover the most important sites, including the Basilica of San Guisto with its 13th century frescoes and mosaic of St. Justus, the town's patron saint. There are the 1st and 2nd century remains of the Roman theater and time to explore the largest seaside piazza in Europe - Piazza dell' Unita. Of course no visit to Italy would be complete without sampling some of her gastronomic treats.

After lunch we cross to Slovenia again, and we walk 2 kms through the incredible Skocjan Cave, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We will walk 90 meters above the giant underground River Reka and finish our trip on the bottom of the deep sinkhole, from here a funicular takes us back to the starting point. En route we also stop at Socerb Castle for a commanding view over Trieste and the Gulf of Koper. We continue on to our hotel, located in the rural village of Grahovo.



Lake Bohinj

Guest house accommodations in Grahovo.

Overnight in Grahovo - homestay

DAY 15 MT. SLIVNICA AND LAKE CERKNICA DRIVE, DORMOUSE MUSEUM, SNEZNIK CASTLE

This morning we drive up to the peak of the very picturesque Mt. Slivnica for a grand panorama over Lake Cerknica, an intermittent lake, followed by a drivearound. When full, it is the largest lake in the country, which under ordinary conditions has an area of about 10 square miles (26 km²) and a mean depth of 20 feet (6.1 m), communicates through a number of openings with a series of subterranean reservoirs or caverns, some of which are above the lake level in the surrounding hills. In the autumn, when the rainfall is slight, the lake is completely drained into the reservoirs lying below its level, and its bed is speedily covered with rich vegetation. With the returning heavy rains, the surrounding higher reservoirs are filled and discharge suddenly through the subterranean passages into the lake, so that the latter very rapidly regains its ordinary volume and may even inundate the surrounding country. It is rich in fish, which disappear and return with the water.

After lunch we stop at the remote and seldom-visited small, unique museum, hidden deep in the forest; the Dormouse Museum. This museum celebrates the history and cultural impact of the four species inhabiting the Slovenian forests. Nearby, we explore the fairytale-like Sneznik Castle, built in the 13th century and recently renovated. It has been owned by several aristocratic families and survived WWII.

Overnight in Grahovo - homestay.

DAY 16 POSTOJNA CAVE, PREDJAMA CASTLE

We drive to the caves of Postojna. Hidden deep within this world-famous cave lies a rare beauty created

over millions of years; carved, shaped and created by water - year after year. A small electric train shuttles us into the cave and from inside the cave we can witness the incredible stalactites shaped like needles, icicles, and even columns and pillars. Another highlight of the cave is a small tank filled with pink olms (fully aquatic, blind cave salamanders). These bizarre little animals are also named the "human fish" (Proteus Anguinus) and inhabit only 2 or 3 caves of the Dalmatian Coast. Postojna Cave has a constant temperature of between 8-10 degrees Celsius with a humidity of 95%.

After our lunch, we visit Predjama Castle, situated in the mouth of a hillside cavern. We hear the legend of the famous robber baron Erazem Lueger, a maverick knight who became Slovenia's Robin Hood by stealing from the rich and giving to the poor. We continue on to our hotel, which is located deep in the ring of the craggy peaks of the Julian Alps, at the shore of Lake Bohinj.

Completing our day, we drive towards the northwestern part of Slovenia, into the middle of the Julian Alp.

Overnight in Bohinj

DAY 17 LAKE BOHINJ HIKE, MT. VOGEL CABEL CAR

This morning, weather-permitting we enjoy a optional hike around the beautiful glacial lake of Bohinj. After lunch a cable car takes us to Mt. Vogel where we enjoy spectacular views over the snowcapped Julian Alps and Lake Bohinj below. We can see Triglav, the highest mountain in Slovenia (9,396 ft/2,864 m), and the beautiful Lake Bohinj below us. We also stop enroute to see a small picturesque WWI cemetery. During WWI, the area was the front line between the Austro-Hungarian

army and the allies. It was immortalized in the famous novel of Hemingway, The Farewell to Arms. The rest of the afternoon is free to relax.

Overnight in Bohinj

DAY 18 LAKE BLEED, LJUBLJANA SIGHT-SEEING

This morning we drive to Lake Bled, a picturesque green lake surrounded by the Slovenian Alps. We visit Bled Castle, perched on a cliff high above the lake. It offers spectacular views of the town, lake and countryside. From here we see the small Church of Assumption on a tiny tear-shaped island, the only true inland island of Slovenia, called Blejski Otok. We enjoy a relaxed lunch in downtown Ljubljana, the capital city of Slovenia. We walk through the city

center and around castle hill - an impressive castle that dates back to the 9th century. Climb up to the High Tower, for incredible views of Old Ljubljana, and the city's famous Baroque style monuments. This afternoon, enjoy some free time before we complete our tour with a farewell dinner.

Overnight in Ljubljana

DAY 19 DEPARTURE

Following breakfast, we bid farewell to our new friends and transfer to the airport for international departure flights.

Julian Alps





Old town of Sibenik with
the Cathedral

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. HOW BIG ARE THE GROUPS?

Each group is limited to 12 participants. Small groups are an important ingredient in adventure travel. They allow for more interaction and more personalized service throughout the itinerary.

2. WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE?

All accommodations throughout; all meals, starting with dinner on day 1 and finishing with breakfast on departure day (i.e. the last day of the ElderTreks tour); bottled drinking water throughout the trip; all internal transportation; airport transfers on day 1 and departure day (i.e. the last day of the ElderTreks tour); all day trips and entrance fees as outlined in the itinerary; tips for hotels (portage), national guide, bus driver, restaurants and spot guides; services of a trip leader.

3. WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE?

International flights, tips to ElderTreks tour leader, alcoholic drinks, visas, travel insurance, photo and/or video fees and public bathroom fees.

4. ARE THESE “EDUCATIONAL” TOURS?

Yes, in the broadest sense of the word, “educational”. We visit museums, national parks and reserves and have talks and discussions on many aspects of history, culture and nature. But this is only a portion of the educational experience. We believe that it is equally educational to meet local people on a non-commercial basis, and even try to learn a few words in the native language. Sometimes the most “educational” moments are wandering through the streets of a mountain village.

5. HOW DO WE TRAVEL DURING THE TOUR?

All local transportation is included in the land price of the trip. We travel by 2 or 3, nine-seater vans, by boat, by foot and by train.

6. WHAT ARE OUR ACCOMMODATIONS LIKE?

Comfortable, well-located accommodations with private bathrooms. Some places overlooking the Adriatic sea, others are located in beautiful alpine areas.

7. WHAT ABOUT THE WEATHER?

Our adventures in Slovenia & Croatia take place in the European spring, summer and fall. Temperatures can vary

between the low 70°F (21°C) to the high 80°F (27°C) from the continental in-land to the Adriatic coast.

8. WHEN IS PAYMENT DUE?

A non-refundable deposit of \$500 USD (plus insurance if you require it) is due at time of booking and will reserve your place on the tour. Payment of the full land cost is due 120 days before departure. Cancellation charges are applicable and are outlined in the “Terms and Conditions” section of our brochure.

9. IS MEDICAL INSURANCE REQUIRED?

Insurance coverage is not included in the cost of your trip. Please note that medical insurance is mandatory for this adventure. ElderTreks offers comprehensive travel insurance and we are happy to provide you with a quote if you call our office. If you are purchasing insurance elsewhere, please ensure you provide the details to ElderTreks as soon as possible.

**Please note those travelers with pre-existing medical conditions must take out travel insurance at the time of deposit*

10. WHAT SHOULD I TAKE ON THE TOUR?

There is a detailed “What to Take” list in our Trip Kit, which we will send to you after you have booked the trip.

11. WHAT MEALS ARE INCLUDED?

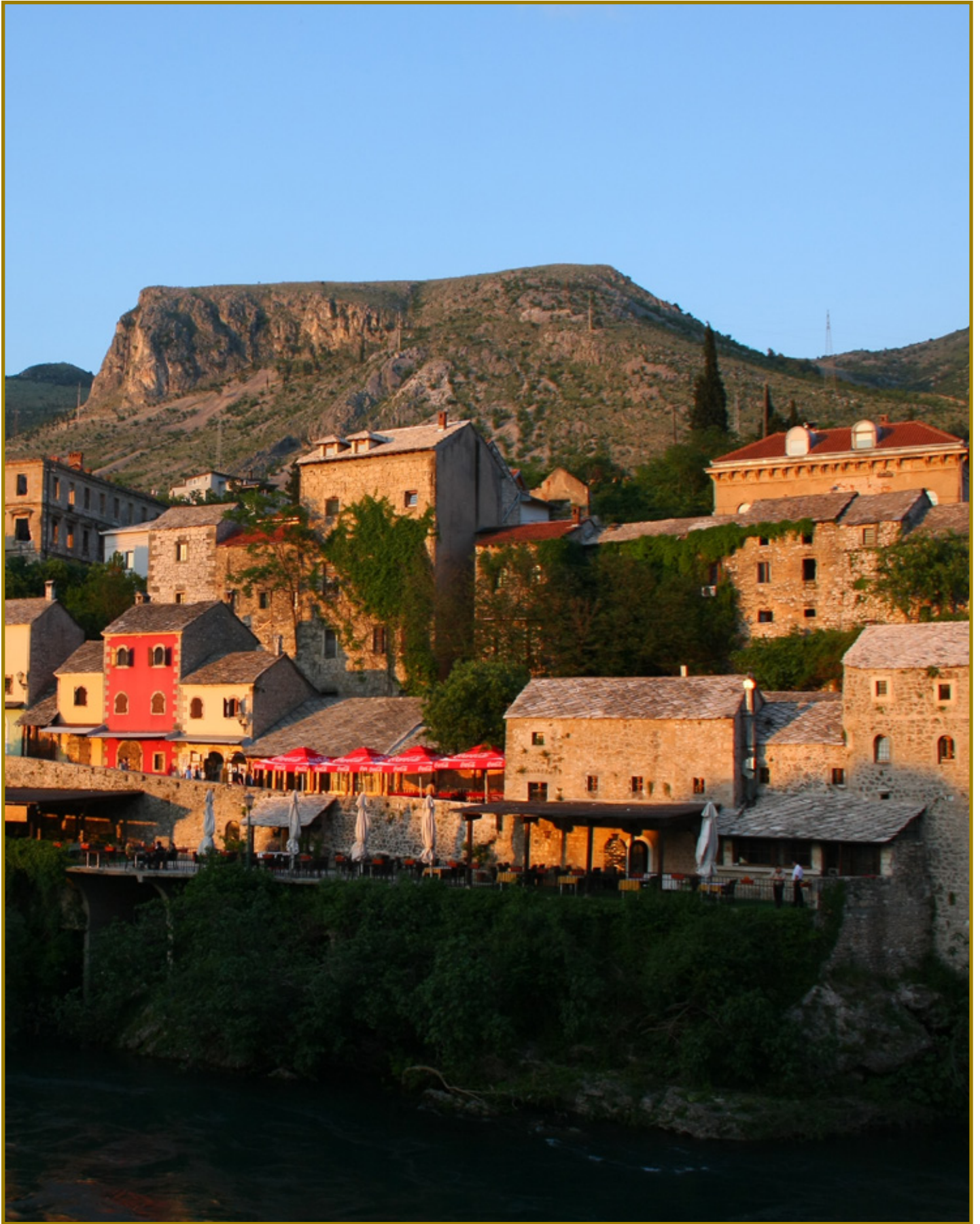
All meals during the itinerary are included, starting with dinner on day 1 and finishing with breakfast on departure day. We eat a variety of local foods prepared in a wide range of settings.

12. CAN YOU ARRANGE MY FLIGHTS?

We would be happy to take care of your air arrangements. ElderTreks offers personalized flight itineraries — not group flights. Stop over enroute, come in a few days early, or extend your stay. Call us for a customized itinerary.

13. WHAT IF I WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION?

If you have any further questions about the adventure, please call our office for more details. A Trip Specialist will be happy to answer your questions. A Trip Kit containing further details on the destination will be sent to you once you have booked the trip.





Paklenica Gorge trail