

Croatia with Slovenia – Treasures of Istria

Tour Code CS

Although less known, the Istrian peninsula has a rich cultural heritage and is a scenically beautiful region with a growing reputation as a gastronomic delight. Small and self-contained, it can claim three of Croatia's most attractive coastal towns in **Rovinj**, **Porec** and **Pula**, with their ancient ports, cobbled streets lined with medieval buildings and one of the world's best surviving Roman amphitheatres. The gems of the fertile interior are the hilltop villages, such as **Motovun** and **Groznjan**, home to the world famous truffles found in the scenic fertile valleys below. We also spend time in Slovenia's beautiful **Lake Bled** region and visit both capitals; **Ljubljana** and **Zagreb** to see their highlights of architecture and heritage



The Amphitheatre at Pula,
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ITINERARY

Day 1 Fly from London to Zagreb. Drive to Bled, SLOVENIA

Morning flight with Croatian Airlines from London Heathrow direct to Zagreb. On arrival we drive across the border into Slovenia to the alpine resort of Bled. Two nights at a 4* Bled hotel with a welcome dinner at a local restaurant (D)

Day 2 At Lake Bled

A beautiful glacial lake in the Julian Alps, Lake Bled is a picturesque and serene escape set amid forests and mountains. We visit the Church of St Mary in the middle of the Lake and the enchanting medieval castle perched on a cliff high above the lake, with splendid views of the surrounding Alpine peaks. Afternoon at leisure to enjoy this wonderful location. Dinner at a local restaurant (B,D)

Day 3 Visit Ljubljana. Drive to Pula, CROATIA

We visit the Slovenian capital today including the remains of the Roman city of Emona, followed by a walk through the historical city centre, well known for its unique architectural appearance, which is the result of the legacy of the Baroque and Art Nouveau periods and, most notably, the work of the famous 20th century architect Jože Plečnik. We cross the river Ljubljanica by one of its many picturesque bridges and finish the tour at the splendid medieval castle overlooking the city. Later we drive to Pula, our base for the next four nights, based in a 4* centrally located hotel. Dinner at a local restaurant (B,D)

Day 4 In Pula.

We spend the morning on foot in Pula visiting its wonderful historic centre that includes the Roman Forum with its well preserved Temple of Augustus, the Hercules Gate; Pula's oldest monument and a charming Byzantine church. An imposing Venetian Castle overlooks the town but the real highlight is Pula's enormous Roman Amphitheatre, built 1st C AD, that dominates the skyline. This afternoon we take a boat across to the largest of the nearby Brijuni Islands, once a playground for ex-President Tito, now a National Park (B,D)

Day 5 Visit Porec and Rovinj

We start the day in historic Porec and visit the Euphrasius Basilica to see its remarkable series of 6th C Byzantine mosaics. We wander through its charming narrow stone streets and pretty squares before continuing to a local winery to sample some of the region's excellent wines over a sumptuous lunch. The

Patrick Syder Travel

Escorted Cultural Tours – Zenobia House, 23 Bowmans Close, Steyning, West Sussex BN44 3SR
Tel/Fax: +44 (0)1903 879737 email: info@sydertravel.com www.sydertravel.com

afternoon is spent in Rovinj, one of Croatia's most attractive coastal towns. The old town is a warren of Venetian palazzi, medieval houses and numerous small churches. A great place to wander and pick up artistic souvenirs, interesting Istrian wines and speciality foods! (B,L)

Day 6 Visit Groznanj and Motovun.

We venture into the interior today and discover a scenic landscape of fertile rolling agricultural land with dotted with pretty medieval hilltop villages. We visit two of the most interesting; Groznanj and Motovun. Both have an individual character, Groznanj; with its spectacular bluff location and home to a myriad of artists and craft workshops and the larger Motovun with its charming restored town walls, ancient city gates and medieval churches. Agro-tourism is the main industry of the region and we shall be able to visit a local organic olive oil farm (B,D)

Day 7 Drive to Opatija. Visit Labin

We leave Pula this morning and head to Labin, a charming medieval hilltop town with steep, narrow streets and ornate Baroque and Renaissance palazzi. We join the winding road that clings to the steep and unspoilt coastline with terrific views across the bay. We arrive at Opatija, known as 'Vienna on Sea' with its Habsburg villas and palaces, exotic plams and manicured gardens and 12 km long waterfront. Two nights at a 4* centrally located hotel. Dinner at a local restaurant (B,D)

Day 8 Visit to Plitvice Lakes. Drive to Zagreb

The Plitvice Lakes National Park was granted UNESCO World Heritage status in 1979. The beauty of the National Park lies in its sixteen lakes, inter-connected by a series of waterfalls, and set in deep woodland populated by deer, bears, wolves, boars and rare bird species. The National Park covers a total area of 300 square kilometres, whilst the lakes join together over a distance of eight kilometres. We spend the day in the NP and are able to enjoy a break for lunch at a local restaurant with specialties from the Lika region. In the late afternoon we drive to Zagreb. Two nights at a central 4* hotel. (B,L)

Day 9 In Zagreb. City tour

We spend the day in the Croatian capital and include the historical monuments of the city such as the 12th C Romanesque Cathedral, the Baroque St Catherine's Church and Lotrščak tower, where the Gric Cannon is fired everyday at noon.. We take a ride on the Zagreb funicular and a walk along the Lenuzzi green horseshoe; one of the major urban interventions in the history of Croatian architecture and horticulture. We will also visit Dolac; the largest and most famous market in Zagreb which opened in the 1930's. Our farewell dinner tonight will be at a quality city restaurant (B,D)

Day 10 Fly London

After a leisurely breakfast we transfer to Zagreb International airport for our lunchtime return flight with British Airways direct to London Heathrow, arriving in the early afternoon (B)

Cost £1595.00 per person in a twin room (excluding international flights) Single supplement charge £250

Price includes –

- ▶ Tour accompanied from London by Patrick Syder
- ▶ National guides for the duration of the tour
- ▶ All transportation by a/c bus
- ▶ Full sightseeing programme including entrance fees
- ▶ Comfortable four star standard category hotels on B+B basis
- ▶ Included meals – dinner or lunch daily at local restaurants
- ▶ Airport transfers
- ▶ Bottled water daily
- ▶ Porter, hotel and restaurant staff gratuities

PLEASE NOTE – personal travel insurance, beverages, some meals, guide and driver gratuities, and international flights to Croatia are not included in the land tour cost



The medieval castle and island church on Lake Bled