

Croatia & Slovenia: Piran, Rovinj & the Istrian Peninsula

Bike Vacation + Air Package

You won't find another cycling adventure with a three-night stay in the stunning seaside city of Rovinj—a picturesque medieval citadel that juts into the clear aquamarine waters of the Adriatic Sea. Located by a splendid pebble beach, your five-star seaside hotel is perfectly positioned to give you the best Rovinj has to offer. As you explore the Istrian Peninsula, you'll experience the best of two countries—pedaling a portion of the famous Parenzana Trail in Slovenia, and spinning through Croatia's scenic Mirna Valley—renowned for its elegant vineyards and rich truffles. Here, your local VBT trip leaders introduce you to a Croatian truffle hunter who leads you on a merry romp to discover this local delicacy with the aid of a truffle-hunting dog. Along the way, you'll experience the elegant vintages, spectacular seaside vistas, exquisite seafood, and fascinating history that make this a cycling adventure not to be missed.

Cultural Highlights

- Take in the scenic coastal vistas of two Adriatic nations on one magnificent adventure.
- Cycle the breathtaking routes of Istria, from seaside paths and old rail lines to sweeping farmland dotted with olive groves.
- Visit a family-owned farm, where you'll hunt for truffles with a trained dog in the forests and enjoy a savory lunch.
- Indulge in generous amenities at exceptional hotels, including 3 nights in a luxurious seaside resort.
- Explore the famous Brijuni Islands National Park, once the private retreat of Marshall Tito, former Yugoslav leader.

What to Expect

This tour offers a combination of rolling terrain and moderate-to-challenging hills and is ideal for everyone from energetic beginners to experienced cyclists. Our VBT support vehicle is always available for those who would like a break from riding.

Tour Duration: 10 Days

Average Daily Mileage: 12-40 miles

Average Cycling Time: 2-5 hours

Group size: 20 max

Climate Information

Average High/Low Temperature (°F)

May 71°/54°, June 78°/61°, July 83°/65°, August 83°/65°, September 75°/59°, October 66°/52°

Average Rainfall (in.)

May 2.3, June 2.2, July 1.6, August 2.1, September 3.3, October 3.6

FLIGHT DAY: Depart from the United States or Canada

Your vacation is about to begin! Spend your first night aloft and arrive ready for an unforgettable trip.

ARRIVAL DAY: Arrive in Trieste / Air Package Night: Trieste

A VBT representative will greet you at the airport to start your first day in Trieste off right. A complimentary car service will whisk you to your centrally located hotel. From here, you are perfectly positioned to explore this charming city at your leisure.

DAY 1: Your VBT Vacation Begins / Trieste / Koper / Piran

Meet your local VBT representative and the rest of the group at the hotel this morning.

Then travel by private motorcoach (approximately 40 minutes) to the Slovenian seacoast town of Koper, an important port since the days of the Roman Empire. Meet your trip leaders here for a short orientation. Enjoy a walk and lunch on your own, admiring the architecture of the Old Town. Return to the meeting point for a bike-fitting session and warm-up ride. The seacoast is particularly charming and connects you to the famous Parenzana Trail, a former narrow-gauge rail line that now welcomes cyclists and other lovers of the outdoors. This line once transported local wine, olive oil, truffles, and more between villages and cities; today, it delivers you to Piran, skirting Slovenia's scenic coast.

Upon arrival to Piran this afternoon, explore, its charming Old Town before your small group gathers for a welcome reception and a delectable dinner at your centrally located hotel.

Today's Ride Choices

Afternoon: Warm-Up Ride — 19 km (12 miles)

What to Expect:

Your warm-up ride will start along the quiet coastal bike path in Koper, which later joins the paved section or the famous Parenzana Trail, a former train route connecting Trieste with the Istrian Peninsula. The scenic bike path has some easy to moderate sections, driving through two bike tunnels, before it arrives in Piran. Finish your warm-up ride directly at your hotel in the historic center of Piran.

Cumulative Distance Range: 19 km (12 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 2: Cycle into Croatia / Grožnjan / Motovun

After a hearty Slovenian breakfast, set out on your bike for a scenic ride along the picturesque coastline. Along the way, pass the Sečovlje Saltpans Nature Park, once a major producer of coveted salt and now a historic site. This marks your final glimpse of Slovenia before crossing into Croatia and pedaling inland, deeper into the Istrian Peninsula.

As you ride, the lush, emerald-green countryside unfolds before you, leading to Grožnjan, known as the “town of artists.” This charming hilltop village is home to 20 art galleries, a film school, and annual jazz and painting festivals. Take time to explore its atmospheric streets with your trip leaders, then enjoy lunch on your own at one of its inviting cafés.

Afterward, a shorter afternoon ride on quieter public roads offers beautiful scenery, including a long downhill followed by an uphill climb, before arriving at the dramatic hilltop village of Motovun—reminiscent of Tuscany’s finest hill towns.

Nearby, some of Istria’s most celebrated wines are produced, while the forests surrounding Motovun are famous for their prized truffles. This evening, enjoy a wine tasting and dinner at your hotel.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Piran to Grožnjan — 38 km (23 miles)

Afternoon: Grožnjan to Motovun — 16 km (10 miles)

What to Expect:

Today, you'll continue following the Parenzana Trail, transitioning from the Slovenian coastline into the Croatian hills. On the Croatian side, with the exception of a short section, the ride will be on paved roads with limited traffic. There is a relatively long ascent before reaching Motovun, but an optional van shuttle will be available.

Cumulative Distance Range: 38 – 53 km (23 – 33 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 3: Truffle Hunting / Independent Dinner in Motovun

Your morning is dedicated to Istria's "underground treasure," the truffle. You ride down into the rich forests that skirt Motovun and arrive at a farm, where canine truffle gatherers and their owners greet you. The farm is also a truffle museum and you'll have the chance to explore after setting out into the woods with the dogs to hunt for some fungi. Then witness how they are best prepared during a cooking demonstration with your hosts, followed by a delicious fresh lunch. Few experiences connect you so intimately with the earth and the local culture.

After, cycle back to the hotel, with longer routes available if you're feeling energetic. Take advantage of your hotel's wellness program this afternoon, perhaps indulging in a massage. Tonight, head into the Old Town for dinner on your own.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Motovun to Lunch — 14 km (9 miles)

Afternoon: Lunch to Motovun — 14 km (9 miles) OR Lunch to Motovun with Extension — 24 km (15 miles)

What to Expect:

Begin your ride with a scenic downhill descent into the valley. If you don't mind cycling on gravel, you may choose to follow the Parenzana Trail instead. After lunch, retrace your route back. For those looking for extra mileage and who don't mind rolling hills, an optional mountain ride is available.

Cumulative Distance Range: 14 – 38 km (9 – 24 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 4: Poreč / Boat Ride to Rovinj

Say farewell to Motovun and cycle toward the Croatian coastline and the city of Poreč, passing through scenic countryside, farmland, and forests. Upon arrival in this seaside town, enjoy lunch on your own and perhaps take a stroll along the waterfront.

Later, head to the pier to embark on a private boat ride to Rovinj, one of Istria's most atmospheric and historic towns.

Situated on an oval-shaped peninsula reaching into the North Adriatic, Rovinj is steeped in medieval charm. Its most distinct site is the church tower that soars above the red roofs. Cobbled streets and intimate squares add to the allure.

After settling into your hotel, take a leisurely stroll with your trip leaders to a special dinner spot they've selected. As you walk through Rovinj's charming streets, you may hear the rhythmic cadence of Istriot, a rare Italo-Dalmatian dialect spoken by only a few hundred people in the region.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Motovun to Poreč — 46 km (29 miles)

What to Expect:

Today's ride takes us toward the seacoast, following rolling hills primarily along quiet country roads with limited traffic. There is no biking in the afternoon.

Cumulative Distance Range: 46 km (29 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 5: Loop Ride from Rovinj

After a delicious breakfast of fresh baked goods, fruits, and other local products, you navigate out of the seaside gem and onto the tranquil country routes of Inner Istria. The refreshing sea air energizes your morning spin into the peninsula's agricultural heart.

Pedal past sweeping fields and lush vineyards before pausing for lunch at a family-owned farm. Here, your convivial hosts have a special meal in store, prepared with ingredients straight from their vegetable gardens and pastures. Throughout your adventure, you'll find that Istrian cuisine is heavily influenced by Italy, perhaps sampling *pršut* (prosciutto), *njoki* (gnocchi), or *pogača* (focaccia). Here on the farm, it's all as fresh as can be.

Later, return to your hotel to indulge in its luxuries. You might spend time relaxing on the public Mulini Beach, just a few steps away. Lounge by the pool amid sprawling gardens. Or treat yourself to a massage or other treatment at the spa.

Tonight, dinner is on your own. Choose from three dining venues at your hotel, or head into town for an authentic Istrian dining experience.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Rovinj to Lunch — 38 km (23 miles)

Afternoon: Lunch to Rovinj — 25 km (16 miles)

What to Expect:

Discover the hidden gems of Istria while cycling along quiet, well-paved country roads. Expect more traffic when entering and exiting Rovinj. Van support is available throughout the day.

Cumulative Distance Range: 38 – 63 km (23 – 39 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 6: Fažana / Brijuni Island / Farewell Dinner

Start your day with another hearty breakfast, with the shimmering Adriatic Sea as your dreamy setting.

Then cycle further down the peninsula to the traditional fishing village of Fažana, traversing the coast of Peroj along the way. Olive oil production put Fažana on the map in Roman times, and olive groves still blanket the surrounding lands. Today, this historic treasure seems frozen in time as fishing boats bob on the bay and its 90-foot seaside bell tower peals on the hour.

After a picnic lunch prepared by your tour leaders, board a ferry to Brijuni National Park, once the private retreat of Yugoslav president Marshal Tito. Today, the island is a beloved local haven with green spaces, small beaches, and crystalline waters. Explore by rented bicycle, tourist train, or peaceful footpaths leading to archaeological sites, remarkable outdoor sculptures, and a stunning viewpoint atop Saluga Hill.

Back on the mainland, return to Rovinj via private shuttle, and celebrate your time in Istria with a festive farewell dinner at the hotel.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Rovinj to Fažana — 31 km (19 miles)

Afternoon: ALT Loop on Brijuni Island — 14 km (9 miles)

What to Expect:

This morning, cycle from Rovinj to Fažana along quiet country roads, where guests will bid farewell to their VBT bikes. After lunch, take a ferry to Brijuni Island, where you can explore this stunning national park by guided tourist train or rental bicycle.

Cumulative Distance Range: 31 – 45 km (19 – 28 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 7: Your VBT Vacation Ends / Air Package Night: Ljubljana

After breakfast, VBT's private motorcoach transfers you to Ljubljana, Slovenia (approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes) for your final overnight stay. Your hotel is ideally located within walking distance of Ljubljana's major sites.

In the afternoon, you are invited to join an included private guided walking tour of Ljubljana, offering

insight into the city's rich history and vibrant culture.

VBT provides city information, including recommendations on what to see and do during your stay.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DEPARTURE DAY: Departure

After an included breakfast this morning, complimentary transportation to the Ljubljana Airport will be provided (an approximately 30-minute drive, depending on traffic) for your departing flight.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

DoubleTree by Hilton Trieste (Arrival Day)

Housed in a sumptuous historical palace dating back to the early 1900s, The DoubleTree by Hilton Trieste is a brilliant fusion of traditional décor and modern interior design touches. A Green Key certified hotel, its in-room amenities include complimentary WiFi, bottled water, a selection of teas, and an espresso coffee machine. This 4-star boutique hotel features a fitness center, an appointment only wellness area, a specialty coffee, tea, and cocktail bar, and an onsite restaurant serving innovative Italian cuisine.

Hotel Piran (Day 1)

With more than 100 years of tradition and breathtaking views of the Adriatic Sea, Slovenia's Hotel Piran is an attractive landmark in this iconic, seaside city. The property is situated in the heart of Piran's lively old town, which invites guests to stroll along its narrow, cobblestone streets.

Roxanich Design Hotel (Days 2-3)

A contemporary hotel with a marvelous location, directly at the foot of the hillside of the medieval town of Motovun, overlooking the Mirna River Valley sits the Roxanich Design Hotel. Spacious rooms are a

mixture of classic and modern styles, with breathtaking views, air conditioning, and complimentary WiFi. The property has a unique wine cellar and offers wine tastings and gourmet food in its onsite restaurant.

Hotel Monte Mulini (Days 4-6)

The Hotel Monte Mulini offers modern amenities in a breathtaking setting. Relax in an air conditioned guestroom with stylish bath, complimentary WiFi, minibar, and more. The hotel spa offers an array of treatments and facilities, including an indoor resistance pool. Outside are terraced pools, one of which is heated; and the hotel's pristine pebbly beach. Mediterraneo, the hotel's excellent restaurant, boasts an expert head chef and sommelier.

Hotel Cubo Ljubljana (Day 7)

Set in the center of Ljubljana, the Hotel CUBO Ljubljana is the perfect base for exploring the capital of Slovenia. Yet it also provides a soothing, tranquil ambiance, buttressed by the friendly hospitality of the staff. The historical architecture of the building where the Hotel CUBO found its home is under cultural heritage protection and has been given a modern and fresh design. The rooms are distinguished by modern and minimalist architecture with top-quality materials and furnished to offer the maximum comfort. Every room has climate control, flat-screen cable TV, a telephone with free calls abroad, in-room safe, and private bath with hairdryer, as well as all the in-room amenities of a 5-star hotel such as a handy, free smartphone to use during your stay inside and outside the hotel and complimentary minibar. Free WiFi is available throughout the hotel.