

## Croatia: The Dalmatian Coast, Korčula & Dubrovnik

### Bike Vacation Only

If your dream vacation involves cycling Croatia's magical Pelješac Peninsula and the island of Korčula, then look no further. From your seaside vantage point, you'll enjoy spectacular views of azure Adriatic waters as you contemplate your discoveries. Since this self-guided cycling vacation gives you the independence to choose your own adventure, you might decide to cycle extra miles—discovering ancient fishing villages and vineyards where you can taste local grk white wine. Or perhaps a day on the water is more your speed—inspiring you to kayak, paddleboard, windsurf, or simply relax and wriggle your toes in the sand. With independence and round-the-clock VBT support, this self-guided Croatia vacation gives you all of the choice and none of the worry.

### Cultural Highlights

- Ride inn to inn, assisted by island ferries, as you soak up the beauty of the Pelješac Peninsula and Marco Polo's storied Dalmatian island of Korčula.
- Cycle past pristine beaches and hidden coves kissed by the crystalline waters of the Adriatic, stopping for a refreshing dip whenever you choose.
- Pedal scenic byways lined with ancient vineyards and olive groves, and sample their wines and oils during delectable meals at VBT-recommended restaurants.
- Discover the birthplace of legendary explorer Marco Polo while wandering the charming medieval streets of Korčula's Old Town, a UNESCO World Heritage site.
- Explore Dubrovnik, an astonishingly preserved red-roofed treasure and UNESCO World Heritage site, dramatically encircled by medieval ramparts.

### What to Expect

This tour features a combination of rolling terrain and moderate hills, primarily on paved, narrow country roads without dedicated bike paths. Most traffic is encountered when arriving at or departing from port towns and ferry docks. Please verify your bike selection in advance, as it is not always possible to change bikes once the tour has begun. Traveling with friends or family? We can accommodate multiple guests on this self-guided vacation. Our 24/7 support system is always available should you need assistance.

**Tour Duration:** 7 Days

**Average Daily Mileage:** 7-40 miles

**Average Cycling Time:** 1-5 hours

## Climate Information

### **Average High/Low Temperature (°F)**

May 71°/56°, June 79°/63°, July 85°/67°, August 84°/67°, September 78°/61°, October 69°/54°

### **Average Rainfall (in.)**

May 2.4, June 1.9, July 1.1, August 1.7, September 2.6, October 3.4

## **DAY 1: Your VBT Vacation Begins / Travel to the Historic Village of Ston and the Seaside Resort Town of Orebić / Welcome Orientation / Warm-Up Ride on the Pelješac Peninsula**

We suggest arriving in Croatia at least one day prior to the tour's start date. Make your own independent travel arrangements to the seaside town of Cavtat to meet your leaders and any other VBT guests departing on the same day at our pre-tour hotel, the Hotel Croatia Cavtat, at 10:00 a.m. For travel details, please refer to your *Vacation Preparation Handbook*.

Your journey to the Pelješac Peninsula (approximately 1.5 hours) begins with scenic coastal views and passes vineyards and shellfish farms, where oysters and mussels are cultivated in abundance.

En route, stop in the 13th-century town of Ston, home to some of the longest preserved defensive walls in Europe—5 kilometers in length and often referred to as the “European Great Wall of China.” Enjoy free time to explore the town's walls or charming streets. Then, have lunch on your own at one of the town's restaurants, many of which highlight the region's fresh seafood and wines.

After lunch, continue to the seaside resort town of Orebić, your home for the next two nights. Your accommodations are at the Aminess Grand Azur Hotel, a modern beachfront property nestled along the sparkling Adriatic Sea. The hotel features direct access to the water, a swimming pool with sea views, and shaded terraces—perfect for relaxing after a day of exploration.

Once settled in, meet your VBT Local Host at the hotel for a Welcome Orientation and bike fitting. Your host will be carrying a VBT sign and/or wearing a VBT garment.

### Orebić

is a lively coastal town with a rich maritime history dating back to prehistoric times. It flourished under Roman and Venetian rule and later took its name from a prominent local family who prospered through the salt trade. Along the waterfront, you'll spot elegant sea captains' homes with lush gardens and classic stonework—a reminder of the town's seafaring legacy. Today,

Orebić is a vibrant port town and gateway to the island of Korčula.

Following the orientation, enjoy a short warm-up ride along the Adriatic coast of the Pelješac Peninsula. Afterward, you may wish to take a refreshing swim in the crystal-clear waters upon returning to your beachfront hotel.

This evening, take a leisurely stroll along the waterfront to explore Orebić, the largest town on the peninsula. Dinner is on your own tonight—perhaps sample freshly prepared seafood at one of the town's inviting local restaurants.

### Today's Ride Choices

Afternoon: Out-and-Back from Hotel Bellevue — 11 km (7 miles)

### What to Expect:

Today's warm-up ride is an out-and-back that begins and ends at your hotel, following flat roads along the scenic Adriatic coast of the Pelješac Peninsula. This easy ride is designed to help you get comfortable with your bicycle while enjoying beautiful coastal views.

## **DAY 2: Out-and-Back Ride to Lovište / Explore the Pelješac Peninsula / Stay Put Day**

Cycle from your hotel this morning along a beautiful Adriatic coastal road. Today's ride begins by retracing the previous day's warm-up route before ascending into the verdant hills of the Pelješac Peninsula, surrounded by lush Mediterranean vegetation. From these breathtaking heights, enjoy sweeping views of Croatia's mainland and the islands of Korčula and Hvar, before descending into the small seaside village of Lovište. Nestled on Luka Bay, this area is known for its figs, almonds, and carob. You may wish to enjoy a fresh seafood lunch before cycling back to your hotel in the afternoon.

Your hotel can also assist with a variety of non-cycling excursions. Wine lovers may enjoy a tasting tour of the peninsula's wineries, sampling some of Croatia's most acclaimed wines. If the sea calls, consider boarding a semi-submersible vessel for a fascinating glimpse of the abundant marine life that inhabits these crystal-clear waters.

After an invigorating day exploring the region, enjoy dinner in Orebić or at your hotel's restaurant.

## Today's Ride Choices

Out-and-Back Ride to Lovište — 38 km (24 miles)

### What to Expect:

The majority of today's ride is along the Adriatic coast of the Pelješac Peninsula, beginning and ending at your hotel. After a coastal start, you'll enjoy a gradual ascent through a scenic valley. Please note that there may be seasonal traffic on the paved two-lane roads, particularly when entering and departing the small resort village of Lovište.

Included Meals: Breakfast

## DAY 3: Orebić to Korčula Town / Move on Day

You depart the Pelješac Peninsula today by boat for the short crossing to Korčula Island, the sixth-largest Adriatic island and an exceptional cycling destination, known for its quiet country roads and stunning vistas.

From the port of Korčula Town, travel across the island to Vela Luka ("Big Harbor"). As you ascend to the island's heights and cycle along its scenic spine, you'll pass through charming villages such as Čara, Pupnat, and Žrnovo. Your route weaves in and out of cypress forests, skirts vineyards known for the local Grk grape, and follows trails perfumed by low-lying Mediterranean maquis. Along the way, enjoy breathtaking views of the dolomitic mountains of the Pelješac Peninsula across the channel. By ride's end, you coast into Korčula Town, the fabled birthplace of Marco Polo, often called a miniature Dubrovnik for its enchanting medieval architecture.

The heart of Old Town is a cluster of Renaissance and Gothic buildings that juts into the channel like a thumb. Its clever fishbone street layout was designed to embrace the cooling summer mistral winds from the west and shield against the icy bura winds from the northeast. With its red-roofed skyline and round defensive towers, Korčula Town is a visual delight.

Settle into your hotel, your base for the next two nights. For dinner on your own, enjoy the hotel's offerings or explore one of the many *konobas* (taverns) in town.

## Today's Ride Choices

Vela Luka to Korčula Town — 57 km (35 miles)

What to Expect:

Cycling from the small port of Vela Luka, you quickly enter the countryside and begin gaining elevation for approximately 6 km (4 miles) after passing through the town of Blato. Winding through forests and vineyards, the route follows rolling terrain through Čara. A steady climb, interspersed with short steep ascents and descents, brings you to the highest point of the day. From here, ride along a plateau for about 4 km (2.5 miles), passing through the town of Pupnat before beginning your descent through the village of Žrnovo. You'll finish your ride back in Korčula Town at your seaside hotel overlooking the historic center.

Included Meals: Breakfast

## **DAY 4: Mljet National Park / Stay Put Day**

Your focus today is the spectacular Mljet National Park, which covers the entire northwestern region of Mljet, the southernmost of the larger Adriatic Islands. The ancient Greeks called it *Melita*, meaning "honey," a nod to its enduring natural beauty. After a scenic ferry ride, disembark into an unspoiled paradise of turquoise waters, lush forests, and rugged limestone and dolomite ridges. Enjoy opportunities to swim in the sea, kayak along the island's shores, or hike around two saltwater lakes. You may also choose to take a small boat across Veliko Jezero, Mljet's large inland lake, to visit the 12th-century Benedictine Monastery of St. Mary. Lunch is available at the island restaurant or back at the port, depending on your preference.

Dinner tonight is on your own back in Korčula Town.

Today's Ride Choices

Korčula Town Loop — 14 km (9 miles)

What to Expect:

A short loop ride from your hotel leads along the waterfront before climbing the hill behind Korčula Town, passing through small villages, and descending back to the seaside. Enjoy sweeping views of Korčula and Orebić along the way. This loop can be combined with one or both of the rides on Day 5 for additional

mileage.

Included Meals: Breakfast

## DAY 5: Korčula Beaches / Stay Put Day

Tranquil, picturesque, and resplendent in its seaside setting, the UNESCO World Heritage site of Korčula is precisely the kind of town where you'll want to spend a leisurely day. Our Stay Put Day allows you to do just that—pursuing your own interests by bike, foot, or water.

As this is your final day with your bike, you might take the opportunity to explore more of the island's hidden corners. Cycle to the village of Lumbarda, known for its calm, sandy beaches and ancient vineyards that produce Korčula's renowned Grk white wine. Alternatively, follow scenic coastal roads to the town of Račišće. While the traditional wooden schooners—called *trabakula*—have largely disappeared from its harbor, the fishing boats and sailing vessels that remain preserve its maritime charm.

Prefer to explore on foot? Wander Korčula's fortified Old Town, climb the medieval towers, or visit cultural highlights such as St. Mark's Cathedral and the Abbey Treasury. Dive into local lore at the Marco Polo Museum or the Korčula Town Museum, and browse the many inviting art galleries and boutique shops.

The surrounding crystal-clear waters are ideal for adventure, too. Rent a kayak or stand-up paddleboard and explore the coastline at your own pace. If you're feeling daring, try windsurfing. For some relaxation, visit the sister hotel of your accommodation for a massage, sauna, whirlpool, or swim at the wellness center (available at an additional cost).

This evening, your hotel concierge can recommend the perfect restaurant to toast your unforgettable Dalmatian Island adventure.

### Today's Ride Choices

Out-and-Back Ride: Korčula Town to Lumbarda — 17 km (11 miles) | Out-and-Back Ride: Korčula Town to Račišće — 29 km (18 miles)

What to Expect:

Out-and-Back Ride: Korčula Town to Lumbarda

This relatively easy ride features gently rolling terrain with short ascents and descents, leading to the sandy beaches of Lumbarda and the Ražnjić Lighthouse at the tip of a peninsula. The final stretch includes a gravel section.

Out-and-Back Ride: Korčula Town to Račišće

Follow the scenic northern coast of the island, passing small villages and enjoying sweeping sea views en route to the sheltered port of Račišće. Your return route takes you inland through olive groves and quiet countryside back to Korčula Town.

Included Meals: Breakfast

## **DAY 6: Travel to Dubrovnik / Move on Day**

After breakfast, board your ferry to Dubrovnik, the celebrated UNESCO World Heritage site affectionately known as the “Pearl of the Adriatic.”

Upon arrival, shuttle to your luxurious waterfront hotel. You'll have time to indulge in the hotel's seaside spa amenities (at your own expense), take a refreshing dip in the Adriatic, or hop on the convenient city bus to explore Dubrovnik's Old Town.

Dramatically set on a limestone promontory between the sea and rising hills, Dubrovnik was the center of the Ragusa Republic for 450 years and a formidable rival to the Venetian Republic. Today, its remarkably preserved medieval ramparts still encircle the Old Town. Walking the 1.3-mile perimeter offers one of Europe's most scenic and memorable walks, with bird's-eye views of the historic city and its red-tiled rooftops. Continue your exploration at street level through narrow alleys leading to Romanesque cloisters, the Rector's Palace, and the bustling marble-paved *Placa*.

You'll find plenty of dinner options in the Old Town or may choose to dine at your hotel.

Today's Ride Choices

What to Expect:

Non-Riding Day

Included Meals: Breakfast

## DAY 7: Your VBT Vacation Ends

After breakfast at your hotel in Dubrovnik, depart independently. For details, refer to your VBT Vacation Preparation Handbook. Depending on your destination, it may not be possible to return to the U.S. on the final day of the tour. Please review airline schedules carefully.

Included Meals: Breakfast

## Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

### Aminess Grand Azur Hotel (Days 1-2)

Admire sweeping sea views from the Aminess Grand Azur Hotel, refuel in the Buffet Restaurant, and toast your travels in Bazeni, its terrace bar. Take a dip in the outdoor swimming pool, rent a scooter, or relax at a nearby pebble beach. Your well-appointed sea-view guest rooms are air-conditioned and include complimentary WiFi.

### Marko Polo Hotel by Aminess (Days 3-5)

Just a 5-minute walk from the old town of Korčula, the hotel overlooks one of Marco Polo's favorite harbors. Take in local flavors and scents on the terrace with a gorgeous view of the Renaissance town of Korčula and the sea. Jump into the outdoor pool or spoil yourself at the resort's incredible wellness center. Choose between the indoor pool, hot tub, sauna, and aromatic massages. Enjoy comfortable rooms with views of the harbor and Korčula.

### Hotel Kompas Dubrovnik (Day 6)

Enjoying a sensational seafront setting overlooking Lapad beach and the blue-green Adriatic, the all-new 4+-star Hotel Kompas Dubrovnik offers superb contemporary design, a luxury spa, and outstanding dining and conference facilities, all with exemplary service. Located adjacent to the exquisite Lapad Bay beachfront and Uvala and its famous tree-lined promenade, Hotel Kompas Dubrovnik is less than 4 km from Dubrovnik's magnificent medieval Old Town city center. The glorious panorama of the entire Lapad Bay and its glistening clear waters and unspoiled beaches can be seen from the vast floor-to-ceiling



windows of the hotel's grand reception and Zenith Bar. Luxury superior rooms offer spectacular vistas of the Adriatic from private balconies.