

## Slovenia, Austria & Italy: Alpine Valleys

### Bike Vacation Only

Explore three lakes in three countries, experiencing authentic local culture as only VBT can reveal. Start by pedaling against the backdrop of the Julian Alps toward the azure waters of Italy's Lahgi di Fusine lakes. As you cycle into the alpine village of Kranjska Gora with your local trip leaders, you'll be welcomed into a traditional 18th-century Slovenian homestead, where you'll learn the secrets of preparing *rateški krap* (filled dumplings). You'll even have the opportunity to try out some traditional Slovenian dance steps during a festive barn party. Your local trip leaders introduce you to a traditional Slovenian farmhouse, pausing for a home-cooked lunch on your way to enchanting Lake Bled. As you spin along peaceful bike paths toward Wörthersee Lake, you'll look forward to another warm family welcome in Austria during a visit to a local home.

### Cultural Highlights

- Experience three European cultures on a single adventure—and even on a single day.
- Enjoy easy cycling as you admire alpine peaks, scenic valleys, medieval settlements, pasturelands, deep wooded slopes, and sunny cornfields.
- Follow a section of the incredible Alpe Adria Bike Path, a lure to cyclists from the Alps to the Adriatic Sea.
- Spend a day at storybook Lake Bled, perhaps boating or hiking as well as cycling.
- Stay at exceptional accommodations, including one of the most luxurious and innovative hotels in the world.

### What to Expect

This tour offers a combination of easy terrain and moderate hills and is ideal for beginning and experienced cyclists. Our VBT support vehicle is always available for those who would like assistance with the hills.

**Tour Duration:** 7 Days

**Average Daily Mileage:** 7-44 miles

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

**Group size:** 14 - 20 max

### Climate Information

**Average High/Low Temperature (°F)**

May 68°/47°, June 72°/53°, July 76°/56°, August 76°/56°, September 68°/50°, October 59°/42°

**Average Rainfall (in.)**

May 5.1, June 6.8, July 7.9, August 6.9, September 5.2, October 3.5

## **DAY 1: Your VBT Vacation Begins / Warm-Up Ride / Arrive in Tarvisio / Welcome Reception & Dinner**

Meet your local VBT representative and your fellow travelers at our Ljubljana pre-tour hotel at 10:00 a.m. Please arrive dressed in cycling clothes and ready to bike. If you've brought your own pedals, have them ready to give to your trip leaders.

From Ljubljana, travel by private motorcoach (approximately two hours) into alpine Italy, where you'll be treated to breathtaking views of the snowcapped Julian Alps to the south and the rugged peaks of the Carnic Alps to the north. You'll meet your trip leaders in a peaceful countryside setting outside the charming hamlet of Valbruna. After an included lunch, they'll lead a safety and bike-fitting session followed by a warm-up ride. This region is especially picturesque and well-suited to gentle cycling through the scenic Canal Valley (Val Canale).

Later this afternoon, explore the main street of Tarvisio. Once a vital stop on a historic trade route through the Alps to Venice, Tarvisio remains a cultural crossroads where Italian, Slovenian, and Austrian influences converge. Perhaps treat yourself to a classic Italian gelato or browse the town's inviting shops.

Your accommodations for the next two nights are at Hotel Edelhof, a cozy, family-run inn nestled between forested hills and the heart of Tarvisio—an ideal base for enjoying all this alpine town has to offer.

This evening, gather with your fellow travelers for a welcome reception and a delicious dinner prepared by your hotel's owner.

### **Today's Ride Choices**

Afternoon: Warm-Up Ride — 11.7 km (7.3 miles) | Warm-Up Ride PLUS — 19.5 km (12 miles)

### **What to Expect:**

Your warm-up ride begins in the picturesque glacial alpine valley of Val Saisera, nestled in the Julian Alps.

Take in sweeping mountain views, serene forest landscapes, and striking rock faces as you coast downhill on a secondary road to the village of Valbruna. For those seeking more, an optional extension leads farther into the upper Saisera Valley, revealing even more breathtaking alpine scenery. Rejoin the main route in the valley to ride a portion of the world-renowned Alpe Adria Bike Path, pausing to explore Camporosso—one of the region's oldest villages. Conclude your ride with a scenic loop through Tarvisio, the largest town in the tranquil Val Canale.

Cumulative Distance Range: 11.7 – 19.5 km (7.3 – 12 miles)

Included Meals: Lunch, Dinner

## **DAY 2: Cycle the Alpe Adria Bike Path / Visit Venzone / Wine Tasting**

Today, you'll have the opportunity to experience the renowned Alpe Adria Bike Path, which allows cycling enthusiasts to ride from Salzburg through the Alps all the way to the Adriatic Sea. Your route follows a recently paved rail trail downhill from Tarvisio to Venzone, at times passing through old mountain tunnels that open onto stunning views of the Val Canale.

You'll often glimpse the River Fella, a tributary of the Tagliamento. Pause in the small town of Pontebba, located at the confluence of the Fella and Pontebbana creeks. During World War II, Pontebba's railway line was heavily bombed, as it served as a vital German supply route to Italy. Along the way, you'll enjoy a scenic ride and stop for a delicious local lunch.

Later, shuttle to the old town of Venzone, beautifully restored to its medieval splendor and declared a national monument. The town's reconstruction includes the Cathedral of St. Andrea, which houses the mysterious Chapel of St. Michele and its famous mummies, preserved naturally since 1647. These bodies were so well maintained that some families periodically retrieved them to commune with ancestors. Venzone is also known for its lavender shops.

Return by shuttle to your inn in Tarvisio and enjoy some time to relax. This evening, join your trip leader for an Italian wine tasting with a local wine expert. For dinner, explore one of Tarvisio's inviting local restaurants on your own.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Tarvisio to Resiutta — 47 km (29 miles)

### What to Expect:

Today, you'll follow the incredible Alpe Adria Bike Path through tunnels, over overpasses, and across iron bridges in the remote Val Canale—an alpine valley with Mediterranean influences. Along the way, you'll encounter villages and small towns, or *borghi*—typical medieval Friulian settlements scattered throughout the rugged mountain landscape. Descendants of Romans, Germans, and Slavs, the residents of this region identify as Friulians, and you may notice their distinct language alongside Italian on many signs. You'll finish today's ride in Val Resia, one of the most secluded valleys in Italy, before shuttling to Venzone.

Cumulative Distance Range: 47 km (29 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

## **DAY 3: Laghi di Fusine / Kranjska Gora, Slovenia / Slovenian Folkloric Evening**

After breakfast this morning, shuttle or ride to Laghi di Fusine (Fusine Lakes). Enjoy an inspiring walk around the lakes with breathtaking views of Mt. Mangart. Then, continue your ride along an easy path through pristine alpine landscapes into Slovenia. Your destination is the charming village of Kranjska Gora, known for its World Cup ski area and its tranquil appeal to nature lovers. Explore this picturesque resort town at your leisure and choose a quaint restaurant for lunch on your own before checking into your hotel.

Later this afternoon, take time to settle in and relax, or enjoy a stroll before your small group gathers for a special Slovenian evening in Kranjska Gora. Learn about local folklore, song, and dance, and enjoy a cooking demonstration in the village's oldest house, followed by a dinner of traditional Slovenian fare.

### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Tarvisio to Mountain Lakes — 23.5 km (14 miles) | Mountain Lakes to Planica Nordic Center — 4 km (2.4 miles) | Planica to Kranjska Gora — 4 km (2.4 miles)

### What to Expect:

Today's biking route is exceptionally scenic, taking you from Italy into Slovenia. Begin your ride through

the Tarvisio Forest Natural Park—the largest state-owned forest in Italy and one of its most treasured natural areas. As you follow the Silizza River up the valley, pause for a relaxing walk around the breathtaking Laghi di Fusine lakes. Shortly after departing the lakes, cross into Slovenia and pedal through the traditional village of Rateče, renowned for Nordic skiing and home to one of the world's largest ski-jump facilities. Continue on to the Zelenci Natural Preserve and the resort town of Kranjska Gora, where you can enjoy a laidback afternoon exploring at your own pace.

Cumulative Distance Range: 23.5 – 31.5 km (14 – 18.8 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

## DAY 4: Cycle the Radovna Valley and Lake Bled

Your alpine adventure continues today with a ride through the Radovna Valley, passing pristine pasturelands. You'll stop at a local farm to sample the delicious alpine cuisine produced in this scenic region of Slovenia for lunch.

Afterward, continue to the storybook setting of Lake Bled. Enjoy an unforgettable experience as you circumnavigate the lake by bike. If time allows, you may choose to take a boat to Bled Island—the only natural island in Slovenia and home to the picturesque Pilgrimage Church of the Assumption of Mary—or walk up to Bled Castle, the oldest in Slovenia, for sweeping views over the lake.

Following your exploration of Lake Bled, shuttle back to Kranjska Gora to relax or enjoy a sauna. This evening, dinner is on your own. You are invited to explore the charming town of Kranjska Gora, where a variety of cozy restaurants and cafés serve traditional Slovenian cuisine and alpine specialties.

### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Kranjska Gora to Mojstrana — 14.2 km (8 miles) | Kosmac Pass to Radovna — 5.1 km (3 miles)

Afternoon: Radovna to Lake Bled — 22.5 km (14 miles)

### What to Expect:

Today's biking is easy and relaxing, beginning with a gentle ride down the valley along the Sava River, passing traditional Slovenian farms, meadows, and pastures. At the village of Gozd Martuljek, take in

spectacular views of Mount Špik—nicknamed “Needle” for its striking silhouette. Follow bike path D-2, a former alpine railway, to the village of Mojstrana, where you may opt to visit the Slovenian Alpine Museum. From here, you can either take a short shuttle over the hills to Triglav National Park and the village of Radovna or choose a more moderate bike ride over the Kosmac Pass. After lunch, continue cycling through the serene and less-traveled Radovna Valley to your final destination, Lake Bled, where you’ll have time at leisure before shuttling to the hotel.

Cumulative Distance Range: 14.2 – 41.8 km (8 – 25 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

## **DAY 5: Bike to Austria / Villach / Velden**

This morning, your bike tour through Austria, Slovenia, and Italy begins with a scenic spin along an easy bike path that winds through a century-old forest. Beyond a mountain pass—and through the dramatic limestone wall formed by the Carnic Alps and the Karavanken—you’ll continue riding along the banks of the Gail River in Carinthia. This picturesque region is a paradise of rivers and emerald lakes set against the backdrop of the Noric and Carnic Alps. Along the way, enjoy a traditional Austrian alpine lunch at the rustic Almwirtschaft Hut.

This afternoon’s longer ride option leads to Wörthersee Lake, following a valley trail through wooded slopes and sunny cornfields. From time to time, you’ll spot church bell towers and charming villages nestled at the base of the mountains.

Your destination is Velden, a chic lakeside town often referred to as the “Monte Carlo of Carinthia,” known for its elegant promenade, stylish cafés and restaurants, and vibrant casino. This resort town is home to stately mansions, blooming gardens, and refined lakeside dining. Your accommodations are at the luxurious Falkensteiner Schlosshotel Velden, a former lakeside castle restored in 2007. Featured in *Condé Nast Traveler* as a “Hot Hotel” with a “Hot Spa,” it is considered one of the most luxurious and innovative resorts in the world.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Kranjska Gora to Lunch — 31.6 km (19 miles)

Afternoon: Lunch to Villach — 16.7 km (14 miles) | Villach to Velden — 18 km (11 miles)

### What to Expect:

Today, you'll cycle through three countries in a single day! Begin on a Slovenian rail trail that winds through the enchanting Italian Tarvisian Forest, then follow an ancient Roman road into Austria. Descend into the scenic Gail River Valley and pause for lunch at an alpine hut in Dobratsch Nature Park. Afterward, continue along the river to Villach. In the afternoon, an extended ride option follows the popular Drau Cycle Path (Drauradweg) through the Austrian countryside to your hotel on the shores of Wörthersee Lake.

Cumulative Distance Range: 31.6 – 66.3 km (14 – 44 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

## DAY 6: Wörthersee Lake

Your bike ride today circles Wörthersee Lake. On the northern shore, Pörschach awaits—an exclusive resort town beautifully situated on a small bay. Continuing along the southern bank, you'll reach the picturesque village of Maria Wörth, known for its two medieval churches and dramatic peninsula setting. A more challenging option for avid cyclists takes you into the hills south of the lake through scenic forested terrain. For a shorter ride, you may opt for a boat crossing to save time while still enjoying the lake's beauty.

This afternoon, you may shuttle back to the hotel and relax—swim or enjoy watersports on the hotel's private beach, warmed by natural hot springs. Or treat yourself to a restorative experience at the hotel's luxurious spa center.

This evening, join your fellow travelers for a festive farewell dinner.

### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Wörthersee Lake Loop With Ferry — 29.4 km (18 miles) | Wörthersee Lake Loop Without Ferry — 39.6 km (24 miles)

Afternoon: Maria Wörth to Velden — 20.2 km (15 miles)

### What to Expect:

Enjoy easy cycling around Wörthersee Lake today. Depart from your hotel in Velden and follow a bike path along the more developed northern shore. As you reach the quieter, less-developed southern side, your route continues on a gently rolling road with scenic views of the lake. You have the option to take a boat from Maria Wörth back to Velden (at additional cost) or complete the full loop around the lake by bike. A longer morning option adds a moderate route from Maria Wörth over the foothills before returning to Wörthersee Lake and your hotel.

Cumulative Distance Range: 29.4 – 49.6 km (18 – 39 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

## **DAY 7: Travel to Salzburg / Your VBT Vacation Ends**

After breakfast, travel by private VBT motorcoach to Salzburg, Austria—a scenic journey of approximately 2 hours and 45 minutes. You'll arrive around midday, concluding your biking adventure at VBT's post-tour hotel in Salzburg. For departing flights, we recommend scheduling no earlier than 3:00 p.m. to allow ample time for airport transfer and check-in.

Included Meals: Breakfast

## **Accommodations**

May vary depending on departure date.

### **Hotel Edelfhof Wellness & Spa (Days 1-2)**

This quaint, family-run alpine lodge is located just blocks from Tarvisio town center. The hotel boasts a wonderful restaurant serving traditional cuisine from this area of Italy. The hotel has a Spa & Wellness Center with services available at an additional cost. Treat yourself to the sauna, Turkish bath, and hydro and chromo therapies. Each handsome room, many of them decorated with hand-painted details by local artists, features wooden floors with traditional wooden furniture. The hotel is not air conditioned, but free WiFi is available throughout.

### **Ramada Hotel & Suites Kranjska Gora (Days 3-4)**

Located in the heart of Kranjska Gora, next to the main promenade, the Ramada Hotel & Suites Kranjska



Gora provides easy access to everything this ski town has to offer. The comfortably furnished rooms feature stunning views of this beautiful mountain setting, as well as air conditioning, French beds, private bath with shower, cable TV, phone, WiFi, minibar, safe, and a teapot. The hotel also offers special antiseptic rooms for guests susceptible to allergies.

### **Falkensteiner Schlosshotel Velden (Days 5-6)**

Located on a Wörthersee Lake promenade, this ancient castle has lured royalty, celebrities, dignitaries, and writers since the late 1800s. After a short time as a private residence, it reopened in 2007, wondrously transformed into a sumptuous retreat with a private lakefront, fitness center, award-winning spa, indoor and outdoor pools, library, sand tennis courts, a putting green, and gourmet, fine, and casual dining, among many other splendid features. *Condé Nast Traveler* has featured Schloss Velden as a “Hot Hotel” and its spa center as a “Hot Spa” of Austria, making it one of the most luxurious and innovative hotels and resorts in the world. In 2008, its spa was voted “Best Spa in Austria 2008” by Gault Millau. Your elegantly appointed room includes a television, a refreshment center stocked with complimentary beverages, and bedside touch-panel controls for lighting and drapes. Air conditioning and free WiFi are available throughout the hotel.