

## Croatia: The Dalmatian Islands

### Bike Vacation + Air Package

Don't be fooled by knock-offs—this VBT vacation is authentic Croatia at its best! For more than 15 years, we've cycled Croatia's Dalmatian Islands, discovering the best bike routes, waterfront accommodations, and pristine, turquoise beaches. Most importantly, we've dedicated ourselves to making friends across the archipelago, swapping stories with local skippers, discovering hidden vineyards and olive groves—even pausing to pet local donkeys. With VBT's deep Croatian roots, you have an invitation to share a home-cooked meal around the unpretentious kitchen tables of two local families. As VBT's Croatian trip leaders guide you on spectacular cycling routes along the azure Adriatic coast, they'll introduce you to their local friends along the way. When you join VBT on this seminal Croatian cycling vacation, you're not a tourist—you're family.

### Cultural Highlights

- Cycle along the harbor of Postira, a beautiful village nestled between the ocean and hillsides graced by centuries-old olive and pine groves.
- Visit a world-renown stonecutting school.
- Connect with daily life in this stunningly beautiful region during two home-hosted meals.
- Behold breathtaking views from Vidova Gora, the "summit of the Adriatic."
- Take a dip in the Adriatic at Zlatni Rat, Croatia's most famous beach.

### 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:** 6-35 miles

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

**Group size:** 14-22 max

### Climate Information

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

April 63°/48°, May 71°/56°, June 79°/63°, July 85°/67°, August 84°/67°, September 78°/61°, October

69°/54°

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

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

## **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 Split**

A VBT representative will greet you at the airport to start your adventure 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: Travel from Split to Brač Island / Warm-up ride / Welcome reception**

After an included breakfast at the hotel, meet your readily identifiable VBT trip leaders in the lobby at 9:00 a.m. Please have your bags out for collection before 8:00 a.m. so they may be transported to the ferry ahead of the group. You will leave the hotel at 9:30 a.m. and walk to the Split pier for your ferry, which sails at 11:00 a.m. to the port of Supetar on Brač Island.

On arrival at the port of Supetar, minivans will transport your group to the village of Postira and the Hotel Pastura, your home for the next three nights. This welcoming, 4-star hotel's location is convenient and quiet and features comfortable, air-conditioned rooms with balconies.

A charming and quiet village, Postira dates to the 14th century. Located five miles from Supetar, Postira is nestled between the ocean and hillsides, and is graced by centuries-old olive and pine groves. One of this town's most famous sites is the remains of a basilica in Lovrecina, on a bay with a beautiful sandy beach.

After lunch on your own, your bike tour of Croatia officially begins. Join your trip leaders for a safety and bike-fitting session, followed by a short warm-up ride along Postira's harbor and then inland to the small village of Dol. In the early evening, travel to the village of Dol for a welcome cocktail reception of homemade grappa on the restaurant's terrace, followed by a traditional Brač Island dinner. Later, return

to the hotel and fall asleep to the sound of lapping waves outside your room.

### Today's Ride Choices

Afternoon: Warm-up Postira — 9.9 km (6 miles)

### What to Expect:

Embark on a short warm-up ride along Postira's harbor and inland to the village of Dol. It is a short, easy ride that will help you get comfortable on your VBT bike. This will also be a wonderful opportunity to get familiar with your route notes and to test your RWGPS. Your trip leaders will assist you if you have any questions about the use of this program.

Cumulative Distance Range: 9.9 km (6 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

## **DAY 2: Cycle from Postira to Škrip and Pučišća / Visit stonecutters' school / Home-hosted dinner**

This morning's ride will bring you to Škrip, the oldest settlement on the island and the source of the stone used at the stonecutter school we will see this afternoon. From there, the ride to Pučišća follows quieter roads along the scenic north coast and passes through humble villages bordered by fig and olive trees. You'll enjoy views of the mainland across the water throughout the ride. Stop in the port town of Pučišća and visit the stonecutters' school. Brač's world-renowned stone has been used for the construction of some the world's most famous buildings, including Diocletian's Palace in Split and the White House in Washington, D.C. This is a unique opportunity to see students' work and learn about a near-forgotten craft at one of the world's few remaining stonecutting schools.

After lunch on your own, you may choose to shuttle back to the hotel or cycle back to Postira, where you will have free time to relax or walk to the beach.

Just prior to dinner, your trip leaders give you a primer on the Croatian language.

Use your newfound skills tonight as you share an authentic Croatian dinner in a local home. Connecting with your hosts during will give you a chance to learn more about daily life on this breathtakingly beautiful

island.

#### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Postira to Škrip and Pučišća – 34.2 km (21 miles)

Afternoon: Pučišća to Postira – 16 km (10 miles)

#### What to Expect:

This morning's ride is a slightly uphill pedal to the town of Škrip. After your visit, you will enjoy riding downhill and continuing on to Pučišća following a quiet road along the scenic north coast. This afternoon's ride takes you along the same scenic coastal road back to the hotel.

Cumulative Distance Range: 34.2 – 50.2 km (21 – 31 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

## DAY 3: Vidova Gora / Rural villages / Milna

Today's journey affords you some of the most spectacular views of your bike tour in Croatia. After breakfast, shuttle to the highest point on the island, Vidova Gora. This lookout, known as the summit of the Adriatic, affords breathtaking panoramas. From here, enjoy more great scenery as you coast through the villages of Nerežišća and Ložišća.

From Ložišća, it's a nine-mile ride down to the port of Milna, the most beautiful marina on the island. Stop here and relax for an included lunch at a local restaurant. Afterward, continue along the coast back to your hotel in Postira via Supetar.

Tonight, you may explore the typical Croatian restaurants in town. Your trip leaders will gladly provide recommendations.

#### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Vidova Gora to Milna – 29.6 km (18 miles)

Afternoon: Milna to Supetar – Milna to Postira – 28.7 km (17 miles)

What to Expect:

After a short shuttle, enjoy beautiful scenery as you ride through quaint Croatian villages. You will experience a few hills, but the support vehicle will be available if you'd like a break from the saddle. From Ložišća, ride nine miles down to the port of Milna. The afternoon ride includes scenic stretches along the coast.

Cumulative Distance Range: 29.6 – 58.3 km (18 – 35 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

## **DAY 4: Bol & Zlatni Rat Beach / Boat ride / Hvar town / Cooking lesson and home-hosted dinner**

Bid farewell to your hotel in Brač and travel by coach across the top of the island to the base of Vidova Gora. Enjoy breathtaking views during your drive to Zlatni Rat (meaning “Golden Horn”), the most famous beach in Croatia. This spit of land reaches out into the water with a gentle slope. You can swim in the Adriatic’s crystal-clear water before lunch on your own in the adjacent town of Bol.

After lunch, take a private boat to Jelsa on the island of Hvar. Then, shuttle to Hvar’s fortress overlooking Hvar town for a visit at your leisure before walking downhill (0.8 km) to your hotel. In the event of inclement weather, this transportation operates as noted below.

Nearly 42 miles (67.5 km) long, seven miles (11 km) wide, and only three miles (5 km) at its narrowest point, Hvar is the most famous and seductive Adriatic island. Along with Bali, Zanzibar, Mykonos, and Capri, Hvar has been called “one of the most beautiful islands in the world” by *Condé Nast Traveler* magazine. Its permanent population of 12,000 people clusters on the western part of the island, adjacent to the most fertile and protected land.

Your hotel’s central location affords the perfect vantage point from which to explore Hvar town, a medieval Croatian settlement with a strong Venetian influence dating to the 16th century. Visit the Arsenal, built in 1612 as Europe’s oldest and perhaps smallest municipal theater. Its purpose was to bring the aristocratic and bourgeois classes together, and it stands as a symbol of reconciliation between social classes and the abolition of privilege—although it should be noted that women were not admitted

until the second half of the 19th century. Take in the expanse of Saint Stephen's Square, the largest Adriatic square after Saint Mark's in Venice.

Tonight, walk to a nearby home for a delicious dinner. This festive repast starts with a welcome toast and a tour of the home's garden. Your hosts will teach you how to prepare some of the best local dishes during a group cooking demonstration.

**Inclement Weather Itinerary:** If rough weather makes it impossible for our small-chartered ferry to operate, guests will travel between Brač and Hvar on the large car ferries that operate via Split, creating a longer travel day. The two ferry rides are separated by a two-hour visit to Split, where you can enjoy a walk and lunch on your own.

Today's Ride Choices

What to Expect:

Non-biking day.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

## **DAY 5: Jelsa / Vrboska / Stari Grad**

Today's ride—certain to be a highlight of your bike tour of Croatia—is relatively flat. After breakfast, take a private shuttle to the town of Stari Grad where we begin today's scenic loop ride through verdant fields, quiet stone villages, and along the narrow harbor to Jelsa. From Jelsa you'll skirt the fjord on a flat and picturesque road, perhaps stopping at a small cove for a cooling dip at Mina Beach (don't forget your swimsuit!).

Your next destination is Vrboska, an adorable harbor town famous for its fortified church. Unique in Croatia, the structure resulted from an urgent need for both the church and the secular citizenry to join together to fortify their village from invaders. Finish your morning ride back in Stari Grad, a charming Dalmatian town situated at the end of a narrow bay. Originally founded in fourth century BCE, Stari Grad (literally "old town") features a main square that offers a number of options for lunch on your own. After lunch, enjoy additional time in Stari Grad, shuttle back to the hotel, or continue biking on a longer ride that brings you back to Hvar.

Back at the hotel, spend the afternoon exploring more of Hvar town or swimming at a neighboring beach. Dinner is on your own.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Stari Grad to Jelsa Loop – 30.2 km (19 miles)

Afternoon: Stari Grad and Hvar – 21.4 km (13 miles)

What to Expect:

Today's morning ride is relatively flat and carries you through verdant fields, quiet stone villages, and along the narrow harbor between Vrboska and Jelsa. In the afternoon, you can choose a moderate ride with hills finishing in Hvar.

Cumulative Distance Range: 30.2 – 51.6 km (19 – 32 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast

## **DAY 6: Hvar / Stari Grad / Soline Beach picnic**

After breakfast, you'll pass fields of poppies, rosemary, and lavender as you begin a steady climb of about four miles (6.5 km) to the village of Brusje. This challenging ride will reward you with dramatic views of a sparsely inhabited landscape crisscrossed by numerous stone walls. Continue downhill to the familiarity of Stari Grad before riding, surrounded by lavender fields and olive groves, on to the village of Vrbanj. Pass by the parish church dedicated to the Holy Spirit in Vrbanj before descending to the UNESCO World Heritage site of Stari Grad Plain. Dating back to the fourth century BCE, Stari Grad Plain represents a comprehensive system of land use and agricultural colonization by the Greeks that hasn't changed for the past 2,000 years. Meet your trip leaders in the village of Vrboska before ending your ride on beautiful Soline Beach with a picnic lunch featuring local delicacies.

Once lunch is finished, enjoy extended beach time or take a 2.2 km walk through the pine forest of the peninsula (weather permitting). After further exploration, the support vehicle will shuttle you back to the hotel where your trip leaders will give you recommendations on how to spend the rest of the day on Hvar.

Tonight, enjoy a farewell dinner on the terrace of your hotel, overlooking the city and the Adriatic Sea.

## Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Hvar to Stari Grad and Soline Beach – 33.4 km (21 miles)

### What to Expect:

Begin your ride with a steady climb to the pinnacle of the island and enjoy stunning views of the surrounding islands of Brač and Vis. Soak up its beauty as you ride through the lavender fields of Hvar. As the terrain flattens you will have a chance to explore the oldest site on the island – Stari Grad Plain, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Your ride ends at Soline Beach with a delicious picnic prepared by your leaders.

Cumulative Distance Range: 33.4 km (21 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## **DAY 7: Travel to Dubrovnik / VBT Bicycling Vacation ends**

Travel after breakfast by ferry to the port of Dubrovnik, arriving around 12:15 p.m. (total travel time is approximately three hours). Upon arrival at Dubrovnik's port, you will shuttle with your VBT representative to the hotel. Spend the rest of the day shopping, exploring, or relaxing in one of the city's outdoor cafés. VBT provides you with city information that includes recommendations on what to see and do in Dubrovnik during your stay.

Post-Trip Extension guests will stay at this 5-star Dubrovnik hotel for three nights.

Included Meals: Breakfast

## **DEPARTURE DAY: Departure**

After an included breakfast this morning, complimentary transportation to the Dubrovnik 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.

### Hotel Park Split (Arrival Day)

Impeccable service in elegant surroundings and a sophisticated and pleasant atmosphere are found within the original stone walls of this beautiful 1921 building. This prestigious hotel offers Old World charm in newly renovated condition. Stay in elegant rooms, feel the touch of the Mediterranean past, and at the same time enjoy modern conveniences like air conditioning and the special atmosphere of this majestic and quiet new hotel, only 5 minutes from the beach or Old Town. You will be warmly welcomed by the staff with a glass of champagne on your arrival.

### Hotel Pastura (Days 1-3)

This 4-star hotel has 50 rooms spread throughout three buildings and is located right on Postira's beach. Hotel facilities include a freshwater swimming pool, a full-service restaurant, a bar, and a café bar. Other amenities include a business center, fitness center, sauna, Jacuzzi, and massage spa. Rooms feature a balcony, air conditioning, satellite television, safe, and minibar.

### Hotel Park Hvar (Days 4-6)

Once the palace of the great Ivanic family in the 16th century, the Hotel Park Hvar is situated in the heart of Hvar town. You'll be treated royally in this 14-room boutique hotel. Thoroughly renovated in 2006, it is located between the former Rector's Palace and St. Mark's church and is close to the beach. Rooms feature partial views of the harbor and town, as well as air conditioning, heated floors, minibar, safe, LCD satellite TV, free WiFi, and private bath with shower. While here, you can also take advantage of the restaurant, the bar/lounge and the hotel's uniquely tranquil and intimate ambiance.

### Hotel Bellevue Dubrovnik (Day 7)

Perched on a promontory above Miramare Bay and within walking distance of the Old Town, this luxurious, air-conditioned boutique hotel offers superb service, modern amenities, and attention to detail. Enjoy access to a secluded beach, or take a dip in the indoor pool. Pamper yourself at the spa, and savor sumptuous dining at the two restaurants and stylish lounge bar. Throughout your stay, you'll admire sweeping views of the bay from your private room.