

## Croatia Bike & Boat: Split & the Dalmatian Islands, Aboard the Jadranska Kraljica

### Pre-Trip-Extension - Zagreb/Plitvice Lakes

2 Nights from \$645 per person, double occupancy

- 2 nights at the 5-star Hotel Le Premier
- Airport car service for arrival
- Private guided tours of Zagreb and Plitvice Lakes
- 3-course lunch at a local restaurant
- Transportation from Zagreb to Split
- Daily breakfast
- City information

Only available with the Air Inclusive Package.

### 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 Zagreb / Begin your Pre-Trip Extension

A VBT representative will greet you at the airport to start your adventure off right. A complimentary car service brings you to your centrally located hotel in Zagreb. Enjoy the remainder of the day at your leisure, exploring this charming Central European city of pastel-colored historic buildings. Zagreb's Upper Town is a richly layered collection of architecture and culture, dense with churches, palaces, and museums designed in traditional secessionist, neo-Baroque, and Art Deco fashion. Pause at a café to dig into a delicious *kremšnite*, a favored flaky custard pastry. And perhaps find the perfect cravat at a souvenir shop, named for the Croats who wore the distinctive scarves during the Thirty Years' War.

### DAY 1: Zagreb walking tour / Independent exploration

After breakfast, meet your local guide at 9:00 a.m. at the hotel for a guided walking tour of Croatia's scenic capital. Endless rewards await those who explore Zagreb on foot. Follow your host into Jelačić Square, named for the 19th-century military general, and into Dolac Market, where growers convene to sell fresh vegetables, fruits, honey, oil, and handicrafts. Continue to Gornji Grad, Zagreb's historic Upper Town. Admire the city's cathedral, St. Mark's Church, and Croatian Parliament while here, and perhaps

eye a place for lunch on the popular pedestrian Tkalčićeva Street, lined with cafés. As you pass the Lotrščak Tower, you may hear the midday cannon firing, a ritual that's been carried out since January 1, 1877.

Enjoy lunch on your own and then follow your interests. Browse the collections at the Museum of Contemporary Art, the Museum of Arts and Crafts, or the Croatian Museum of Naïve Art, one of the first to exhibit this unique art form in the world. Dinner this evening is on your own.

## **DAY 2: Travel to Split / Visit to Plitvice Lakes National Park**

After breakfast, you meet your English-speaking driver at 8:00 a.m. at the hotel and travel to Split. En route, you stop to explore one of Croatia's most splendid natural wonders, Plitvice Lakes National Park. This UNESCO World Heritage site is renowned for its many lakes—16 in all—that descend a hillside in a step pattern over karst and through dense woodland. The setting here is lush and primitive, a spellbinding canvas of greens and blues set to a mesmerizing soundtrack of falling water. Join a local guide for a private tour along the trails and boardwalks that wind through the park. As you stroll, you might spot some of the 55 species of orchid here.

After taking in the breathtaking beauty, pause for a memorable three-course Croatian lunch, sampling a cuisine with Slavic, Hungarian, and Turkish influences and spices. Whatever's on the menu, you can be sure of fresh ingredients locally sourced and harvested.

Arrive in Split, a waterfront gem, late this afternoon. So beautiful is its seaside setting that the 3rd-century Roman Emperor Diocletian chose this place as his retirement home; remarkably, his ancient palace still plays a major role in the city's daily life, hosting shops and restaurants. There'll be time to settle into your hotel before setting out for dinner on your own this evening, wandering the labyrinthine warrens, passageways, and courtyards.