

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, soaking up the magnificence of the stunning Pelješac Peninsula and Marco Polo's Dalmatian Island of Korčula.
- Cycle along numerous beautiful beaches and coves kissed by the crystalline waters of the Adriatic, stopping as you wish for a refreshing dip.
- Pedal the scenic byways of Dalmatia's famed ancient vineyards and olive groves and sample their wines and oils during delectable meals at VBT-recommended restaurants.
- Discover the birthplace of legendary traveler Marco Polo among the charming, medieval streets of Korčula's Old Town, a UNESCO World Heritage site.
- Explore Dubrovnik, an astonishingly preserved, red-roofed medieval treasure and UNESCO World Heritage site encircled by dramatic ramparts.

What to Expect

This tour offers a combination of rolling terrain and moderate hills on mainly paved narrow country roads, with no dedicated bike paths. Most traffic is encountered while arriving and departing in port towns and at ferry docks. Please verify your bike selection for this tour as it is not always possible to change bikes once you arrive on tour. Travel with your friends and family—we can accommodate multiple guests on this self-guided vacation. Our 24/7 support system is available if needed.

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: VBT Self-Guided Bicycle Vacation begins / Travel to the historic village of Ston and seaside resort town of Orebić / Welcome Orientation / Warm-up ride on the Pelješac Peninsula

Meet your driver at 10:00 a.m., along with any other VBT guests departing on the same day, in the lobby of the Hotel Croatia Cavtat. Begin your journey (approximately 1.5 hours) to the Pelješac Peninsula, passing vineyards and coastal views of the abundant oyster and mussel farms, before arriving in the 13th-century town of Ston. Enjoy leisure time to explore the town's walls—5 km in length and sometimes referred to as the "European Great Wall of China." Then enjoy lunch on your own at one of the restaurants featuring fresh oysters and mussels and the lovely wines of the peninsula.

After lunch continue your journey to the seaside resort town of Orebić and your accommodations for the next two nights. Once settled in, meet your Local host at the hotel for a Welcome Orientation and bike fitting. Afterward, enjoy a short warm-up ride along the Pelješac Peninsula's Adriatic coast. A refreshing swim in crystalline waters might be in order once you've returned to your beachfront hotel.

Orebić is a vibrant little seaside resort town dating back to prehistoric times. It was an important maritime center during Roman and Venetian times and was later named for the family that first harnessed the salt trade to bring wealth to Dalmatia. This charming enclave honors its seafaring past in the beautifully preserved homes of sea captains along the waterfront, each grandly built and adorned with extravagant gardens. Today it serves as a major port for car ferries to the island of Korčula.

This evening, enjoy a short stroll from your hotel along the waterfront to explore the small seaside town of Orebić, the largest town on the Pelješac Peninsula. Dinner is on your own this evening, perhaps a freshly prepared seafood dish in one of Orebić's restaurants.

Today's Ride Choices

Loop ride from Hotel Bellevue — 11 km (7 miles)

What to Expect:

The loop ride departing from and ending at your hotel is on the Pelješac Peninsula coast along the Adriatic Sea. You follow flat roads for today's easy warm-up ride so you can easily become familiar with your bicycle.

DAY 2: Loop 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 following the previous day's warm-up ride before you ascend into the verdant hills of the Pelješac Peninsula among luxuriant Mediterranean vegetation. From these breathtaking heights, enjoy sweeping views of Croatia's mainland and Korčula and Hvar islands before coasting into the small seaside village of Lovište. Overlooking Luka Bay, this area is known for its figs, almonds, and carob. You may want to enjoy a fresh seafood lunch before cycling back to your hotel in the afternoon.

Your hotel can also assist you with a variety of non-cycling excursions. Wine connoisseurs may enjoy a tasting tour of the Peninsula's wineries and sample some of Croatia's most notable wines. If the sea is beckoning, discover an underwater world when you board a semi-submersible vessel that gives you a glimpse of the abundant marine life that thrives in these crystal-clear waters.

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

Today's Ride Choices

Loop ride to Lovište — 38 km (24 miles)

What to Expect:

The majority of your ride departing from and ending at your hotel is along the Pelješac Peninsula Adriatic coast. You start along the coast for today's ride before a gradual ascent through a scenic valley. There could be seasonal traffic on the paved 2-lane roads as you enter and depart 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 a wonderful cycling destination of quiet country roads and astonishingly beautiful vistas.

From the port of Korčula Town, travel across the island to Vela Luka, meaning “big harbor.” At the western end, you ascend to Korčula’s heights and cycle along the spine of the island, savoring magnificent views and passing through charming villages such as Čara, Pupnat, and finally Žrnovo. Your route ducks in and out of cypress forests, skirts vineyards that produce the local Grk grape, and passes aromatic low-lying Mediterranean *maquis*. As you ride, the dolomitic mountains of the Pelješac Peninsula appear to the north just across the Pelješac Channel. By the ride’s end, you coast into Korčula Town, the fabled birthplace of Marco Polo, often called a miniature Dubrovnik for its beautiful medieval buildings and stonework.

The heart of the Old Town, a cluster of Renaissance and Gothic buildings, sticks into the channel like a thumb. The ingenious fishbone layout of its streets was designed to welcome the cooling winds of the summer mistral from the west and block the icy winds of the winter *bura* from the northeast. Its red-roofed pastiche and round defensive towers are a delight to behold.

Settle into your hotel, your base for the next two nights. For dinner on your own, you may enjoy the hotel’s offerings or select from the many *konobas*, or 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 enter the countryside quickly and gain elevation for about 6 km (4 miles) after passing the town of Blato. Winding through forest and vineyards, you follow rolling terrain through Čara. Your steady climb is mixed with some short steep ascents and descents, eventually bringing you to the highest point of the day. Riding along the plateau for about 4 km (2.5 miles), you pass through the town of Pupnat, then begin your descent through the village of Žrnovo. Later, you arrive back to the town of Korčula and 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, comprising all of the northwestern region of Mljet, the southernmost of the larger Adriatic Islands. Ancient Greeks called it Melita, meaning “honey,” and still today, its scenic beauty promises a sweet Dalmatian experience. Enjoy a scenic ferry ride over, then disembark onto an unspoiled wonderland surrounded by turquoise waters and cloaked in forest and shrub. Among its limestone and dolomite ridges, you'll have opportunities to swim in the refreshing ocean waters, kayak along its shores, and hike around two saltwater lakes. You can also cruise across Veliko Jezero, Mljet's large inland lake, to the small island that hosts the 12th-century Benedictine Monastery of St. Mary. Here you could enjoy lunch overlooking the lake at the island's restaurant or return to the port for other lunch venue options.

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 takes you from your hotel, along the waterfront, climbs to the hill behind Korčula town through some small villages and then descends back to the seaside with sweeping views of the town and Orebic. This loop can be combined with one or both of the rides on Day 5 for longer 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 want to spend a leisurely day. Our Stay Put Day lets you do just that, pursuing your own desires by bike, foot, or water. As this is your final day with your bike, you might want to spend some time on the saddle exploring the nooks and hideaways in nearby villages and beaches. Our route to Lumbarda's sandy, calm sands, for instance, leads you through ancient vineyards

that produce the island's renowned Grk white wine. Another longer ride leads you along scenic roads to the town of Račišće. The beautiful wooden schooners – known as *trabakula* – that once graced its harbor have been replaced by more modern ships, but plenty of tiny fishing and sailing boats still lend the town a distinct charm.

Alternatively, you might set out on foot to explore the city's defenses, visit St. Mark's Cathedral and Abbey Treasury, learn about the famed native son at the Marco Polo Museum, or gain more insight into the island town's past and culture at the Korčula Town Museum. The Old Town boasts ample inviting art galleries and shops.

The surrounding crystal-clear waters are ideal for exploring, too. Paddle along the shore in a rented kayak or on a stand-up paddleboard. You might even try your hand at windsurfing. Step into the sister hotel of your accommodation for a soothing massage, sauna, whirlpool, or swim at the wellness center, at an additional fee. This evening, your hotel concierge can help you find the ideal restaurant to celebrate your Dalmatian Island adventure!

Today's Ride Choices

Korčula Town to Lumbarda out and back – 17 km (11 miles) | Korčula Town to Račišće out and back – 29 km (18 miles)

What to Expect:

Korčula Town to Lumbarda out and back:

This relatively easy out-and-back ride features some rolling terrain of short ascents and descents, delivering you to Lumbarda, its sandy beach, and Razniic light house at the tip of a peninsula along some gravel.

Korčula Town to Račišće out and back:

Ride along the northern coast of the island, winding past small villages with sea views to the small protected port of Račišće and following an inland route through olive groves before returning to Korčula Town.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 6: Travel to Dubrovnik / Move on Day

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

Upon arrival, shuttle to your luxurious waterfront hotel. There’ll be time to indulge in your hotel’s seaside spa amenities at your own expense, take a dip in the Adriatic or hop on the convenient city bus to Dubrovnik’s Old Town. Set on a limestone promontory between the blue sea and rising hills, this dramatic city was the center of the Ragusa Republic for 450 years and a formidable rival of the Venetian Republic. Today, its remarkably preserved ramparts still encircle the medieval town. The 1.3-mile perimeter offers one of Europe’s most scenic and incredible walks, giving you a bird’s-eye view of the city’s medieval layout, a rich canvas of terra-cotta roofs. Continue your discovery at street level, following narrow warrens to Romanesque cloisters, the Rector’s Palace, and the shops along the marble-paved Placa. You will find plenty of dinner options here, or you may dine back at your hotel.

Today's Ride Choices

What to Expect:

Non-riding day

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 7: VBT Self-Guided Bicycle Vacation ends

After breakfast at your hotel in Dubrovnik, depart on your own. Depending upon your destination, it may not be possible to depart for the U.S. on the last day of the tour. Please check airline schedules carefully.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

Aminess Bellevue Hotel (Days 1-2)

The hotel boasts a spectacular quiet location embraced by the sea, pines and cypress in the renowned

wine-growing region of Croatia. It is within easy walking distance to the town and just a 15-minute boat ride to the island of Korčula. Built in 1935, Bellevue was one of the area's most beautiful local palaces. Its traditional-style renovation honoring the maritime history of Orebić has given it a new splendor. Appreciate the alluring pebble beaches and pools in front of the hotel. The hotel's modern restaurant overlooking the sea offers both traditional Mediterranean dishes and international classics. Guests enjoy the quieter non-sea view rooms.

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.