

## Slovenia, Austria & Italy: Alpine Valleys

### Bike Vacation Only

The scenic and savory best of three countries is revealed on one VBT bike tour to Austria, Italy, and Slovenia! On easy bike routes—including the famous Alpe Adria Bike Path—you'll absorb sweeping views of snowcapped peaks, pristine pasturelands, medieval settlements, deep wooded slopes, emerald lakes, and sunny cornfields. Take a spin around Wörthersee Lake and picture-perfect Lake Bled, and roll through tunnels opening onto spectacular vistas. Hop off the bike to savor tasty included meals and local wines, visit a farm, explore a cherished ski resort, and more. And end each exhilarating day in luxurious resorts and boutique hotels—including a celebrated lakeside hotel that has hosted royalty, celebrities, dignitaries, and writers for more than a century.

### 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.

Join a local wine expert for a tasting of Italian wines.

Savor traditional Slovenian cuisine, including lunch at a local farm and a cooking demonstration.

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 easy terrain throughout the trip and is ideal for beginning cyclists.

**Tour Duration:** 7 Days

**Average Daily Mileage:** 7 - 44

**Average Cycling Time:** 00:45 - 04:00

### Climate Information

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

May 68°/47°, Jun 72°/53°, Jul 76°/56°, Aug 76°/56°, Sep 68°/50°, Oct 59°/42°

### Average Rainfall (in.)

May 5.1, Jun 6.8, Jul 7.9, Aug 6.9, Sep 5.2, Oct 3.5

## DAY 1: Bike tour begins / Tarvisio, Italy

Meet your local VBT representative and the rest of the group at our Ljubljana hotel at 10:00 a.m.

If the first day of your tour is a Wednesday, your meeting point will be at the Lesar Hotel Angel (Lesar Angel, Gornji Trg 7, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia). If the first day of your tour is a Friday, your meeting point will be the Allegro Hotel (Allegro Hotel, Gornji Trg 6, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia).

Please come dressed in cycling clothes and ready for biking. Make sure your luggage is tagged with VBT luggage tags. If you have brought your own pedals, please have them ready to give to your trip leaders.

If you are delayed for any reason, please contact VBT's hotel in Ljubljana to advise the staff of any travel delays or changes. They will pass your message on to your VBT trip leaders.

From Ljubljana, transfer by private motorcoach (approximately two hours) to alpine Italy, where you'll be treated to staggering vistas 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 countryside setting outside the charming hamlet of Valbruna, Italy. After an included lunch, they will hold a safety and bike-fitting session followed by a warm-up ride. The area is particularly charming and ideal for easy bike rides through the scenic Canal Valley (Val Canale).

This afternoon, explore the main street of Tarvisio, once an important stop on a trade route traversing the Alps to Venice. Its strategic border location has made it a crossroads of languages and cultures among Italy, Slovenia, and Austria. Perhaps you'll indulge in an Italian *gelato*, or visit the town's quaint shops. Later, your small group gathers for a welcome reception and a delectable dinner prepared by your hotel owner.

The Hotel Edelfhof is a charming family-run inn set between the surrounding forests and the center of Tarvisio, making it easy to explore everything this small alpine town has to offer.

Accommodation: Hotel Edelfhof Wellness & Spa, Tarvisio, Italy

Included Meals: Lunch, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 10.9 – 19.5 km (6.8 – 12 miles)

*Afternoon*

Warm-up: 10.9 km (6.8 miles)

Warm-up Plus: 19.5 km (12 miles)

What to Expect: Your warm-up ride will start in the picturesque glacial alpine valley of Val Saisera, located in the Julian Alps. Enjoy the sweeping mountain views, as well as the forest's serenity and magnificent rock faces.

Begin with a downhill coast on a secondary road to the village of Valbruna. On an optional route extension, you can discover the upper Saisera valley, offering breathtaking mountain scenery. Down in the main valley, join the world-renowned Alpe Adria Bike Path. On your way, you will have time to explore Camporosso, one of the oldest villages in the region. Finish your warm-up ride with a loop through Tarvisio, the largest town in the tranquil valley of Val Canale.

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

Today, you'll have the opportunity to experience the renowned Alpe Adria Bike Path, which enables cycling enthusiasts to ride from Salzburg through the Alps all the way to the Adriatic Sea. Your journey will follow the recently paved rail trail downhill from Tarvisio to Venzone, sometimes traveling through old mountain tunnels opening up on wonderful views of the Val Canale.

At times, you will catch glimpses of the River Fella, a tributary of the Tagliamento. You can pause in the small town of Pontebba, located at the confluence of the Fella and Pontebbana creeks. The railroad line in Pontebba was the target of heavy aerial bombing during World War II, as this was Germany's main resource for transporting supplies to Italy. During your scenic ride, you'll pause for an enjoyable local lunch.

Later, you'll shuttle to the old town of Venzone, which has been restored to its medieval splendor. This excellent example of reconstruction has been declared an Italian National monument. The reconstruction includes the Cathedral of St. Andrea, home to the mysterious Chapel of St. Michele; its famous mummies date to 1647. Prior to burial, these bodies were perfectly preserved. They were so recognizable decades later, some people periodically retrieved the bodies to commune with their dead ancestors. The town is also known for its lavender shops. Later this afternoon, you will shuttle back to your inn.

Back in Tarvisio, enjoy time to relax. Then, join your trip leaders for an Italian wine tasting with a local wine expert. Choose a local restaurant for dinner on your own.

Accommodation: Hotel Edelfhof Wellness & Spa, Tarvisio, Italy

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Today's Ride Choice:

Cumulative Distance Range: 45 km (27 miles)

*Morning*

Tarvisio to Resiuta: 45 km (27 miles)

What to Expect: Today, you'll follow the incredible Alpe Adria Bike Path through tunnels and over overpasses and iron bridges in the remote Val Canale, an alpine valley with Mediterranean influences. On your journey, you'll discover villages and small towns or borghi—typical medieval Friulian settlements scattered through the rough mountainous landscape. Descendants of Romans, Germans, and Slavs—the residents of this region—identify themselves as Friulians and speak a language you may see, along with Italian, on many of the signs. You'll finish today's ride in the Val Resia, one of the most remote of Italian valleys, before shuttling to Venzone.

## **DAY 3: Laghi di Fusine / Kranjska Gora, Slovenia / Cooking demonstration**

After breakfast this morning, shuttle or ride to Laghi di Fusine (Fusine Lakes). Enjoy an inspiring walk around the lake with breathtaking views of Mt. Mangart. Back on your bike, ride an easy path through a pristine alpine landscape into Slovenia. Your destination is the charming village of Kranjska Gora, famous for its World Cup ski area and an adjacent peaceful retreat for nature lovers. Explore this picturesque ski resort town at your leisure and find a quaint restaurant to have lunch on your own before checking into your hotel.

Later in the afternoon, take some time to settle in and relax, or enjoy a stroll before your small group gathers for a special Slovenian evening in Kranjska Gora. Enjoy a cooking demonstration at a local restaurant, followed by a dinner of traditional Slovenian fare.

Accommodation: Ramada Hotel & Suites Kranjska Gora, Kranjska Gora, Slovenia

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 23.5 – 31.5 km (14 – 19 miles)

*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 is exceptionally scenic, leading you from Italy to Slovenia. You will start off through the Tarvisio Forest Natural Park, the largest state-owned forest and one of the most precious natural areas in Italy. Going up the valley along the River Silizza, you'll stop at Laghi di Fusine lakes, where you can enjoy a relaxing walk around a lake with breathtaking scenery.

Shortly after leaving the lakes, you'll cross the border to Slovenia, stopping at the traditional village of Ratece. This village is famous for Nordic skiing and boasts one of world's largest ski-jump facilities, where numerous world records were set. Your ride will then take you to the Zelenci Natural Preserve and Kranjska Gora. Here you can spend a relaxing afternoon, strolling the town and experiencing its laidback atmosphere.

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

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

Afterward, continue to the storybook setting of Lake Bled. Enjoy an unparalleled experience of its splendor as you circumnavigate the lake by bike. If time allows, you may opt to take a boat to Bled Island—the only natural island in Slovenia and home to the beautiful Pilgrimage Church of the Assumption of Mary. Or walk up the hill to Bled Castle, the oldest castle in Slovenia, offering amazing views over the lake.

After your exploration of Lake Bled, shuttle back to Kranjska Gora to relax or enjoy a sauna. Prepare for tomorrow's bike tour in Austria, Slovenia, and Italy with a hearty dinner at the inn tonight.

Accommodation: Ramada Hotel & Suites Kranjska Gora, Kranjska Gora, Slovenia

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

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

*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. Start by cycling down the valley along the Sava River, passing typical Slovenian farms with pastures and meadows. At the village of Gozd Martuljek, you'll admire spectacular views of Mount Špik, or "Needle"—named for its silhouette, as you'll see. Continue to follow bike path D-2, built over a former alpine railroad, to the village of Mojstrana, where you have an opportunity to visit the Slovenian Alpine Museum. At this point, you will take a short shuttle over the hills to Triglav National Park and the village of Radovna. A moderate biking option is also available through the Kosmac Pass to Radovna.

After lunch, continue biking through the pristine and less-traveled valley of Radovna to your final destination of the day, Lake Bled, where you have time at leisure before shuttling to the hotel.

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

This morning, your bike tour in Austria, Slovenia, and Italy starts with a scenic spin on an easy bike path that leads through a century-old forest into the country. Beyond a pass—and through the immense limestone wall formed by the Carnic Alps and the Karavanken—you'll continue cycling along the banks of the Gail River in Carinthia. This region is a scenic paradise of rivers and small emerald lakes set against the backdrop of the Noric and Carnic Alps. En route, you'll enjoy a traditional Austrian alpine lunch at the Almwirtschaft Hut.

This afternoon's longer option takes you to Wörthersee Lake. Your path follows the valley through deep wooded slopes and sunny cornfields. At times, you'll catch a glimpse of church bell towers or small villages laid out like blankets at the foot of mountains. For a shorter option, stop and explore the town of Villach and wander the pedestrian streets to shop or sample a local brew. From Villach, take a short train journey to Velden and enjoy a leisurely walk from the train station to your hotel, where you'll stay for the next two nights.

Velden is a chic small town known as the little "Monte Carlo of Carinthia" for its elegant promenade, trendy cafés and restaurants, and busy casino. Home to many wealthy families of ancient lineage, it is a town of stately mansions, colorful gardens and refined lakeside restaurants. Your hotel is the magnificent Falkensteiner Schlosshotel Velden, an ancient castle on the lake's banks. It was reopened in 2007 after a long and detailed restoration. *Condé Nast Traveler* has featured it as a "Hot Hotel" and its spa center as the "Hot Spa" of Austria—making it one of the most luxurious and innovative hotels and resorts in the world.

Accommodation: Falkensteiner Schlosshotel Velden, Velden, Austria

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 32.2 – 72.9 km (14 – 44 miles)

*Morning*

Kranjska Gora to Lunch: 32.2 km (19 miles)

*Afternoon*

Lunch to Villach: 23.5 km (14 miles)

Villach to Velden: 17.8 km (11 miles)

What to Expect: You will cycle through three countries in a single day today! Start on a Slovenian rail trail that leads through the enchanting Italian Tarvisian Forest toward Austria. Before the border, your bike path will depart the rail trail to join an ancient Roman road. Entering Austria, you'll descend into the Gail River valley, stopping en route for lunch at an alpine hut in Dobratsch Nature Park. After lunch, you'll continue biking along the river to Villach.

In the afternoon, a longer cycling option takes you on a very pleasant bike ride through the Austrian countryside on the popular Drau Cycle Path (*Drauradweg*) to your hotel on the shores of Wörthersee Lake.

## DAY 6: Wörthersee Lake

Your bike ride today takes you around Wörthersee Lake. On the northern side, Pörschach is an exclusive tourist resort, beautifully located on a little bay. Continuing to the southern bank, you'll arrive at the picturesque village of Maria Wörth, which features two little medieval churches and a small peninsula that juts dramatically into the lake. A more challenging option for avid bikers follows the hills south of the lake into a scenic forest. For shorter options, a boat ride across the lake helps you cover ground more quickly.

You may shuttle back to your hotel and spend the rest of the afternoon swimming, relaxing, or enjoying watersports on the hotel's private beach. Thanks to the natural hot springs, the waters are sure to be warm and pleasant. Alternatively, you might choose to pamper yourself at the hotel's luxurious spa center.

In the evening, gather with your travel mates for a festive farewell dinner.

Accommodation: Falkensteiner Schlosshotel Velden, Velden, Austria

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 29.4 – 64.2 km (18 – 39 miles)

*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: 24.6 km (15 miles)

What to Expect: Enjoy easy cycling around Wörthersee Lake today. Set off from your hotel in Velden for a bike path on the lake's more densely built-up northern shore. As you reach the quieter and less-developed southern shore, your route follows a gently rolling road with great views of the lake. You have an option to take the boat from Maria Wörth to Velden (additional cost) or continue the ride around the lake to the hotel. The longer morning option adds a moderate bike route from Maria Wörth over the foothills before returning to Wörthersee Lake and your hotel.

## **DAY 7: Transfer to Salzburg / Free time / VBT Bicycle Vacation ends**

After breakfast, VBT's private motorcoach takes you to Salzburg, Austria (approximately two hours, 45 minutes). You will arrive around noon. Your trip ends here at VBT's Salzburg hotel. We recommend booking flights no earlier than 3:00 p.m. from Salzburg.

VBT provides you with City Information that includes information and recommendations on what to see and do in Salzburg during your stay.

Accommodation: Hotel Goldener Hirsch, Salzburg, Austria

Included Meals: Breakfast

## **Accommodations**

May vary depending on departure date.

### **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.

### **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.