

Croatia: The Dalmatian Islands

Bike Vacation Only

The lovely Dalmatian islands are best experienced by bike, as you'll discover on scenic rolls through charming stone-cut villages, past fragrant fields and pine groves, and along the spectacular coast. VBT's unique itinerary also carries you into the heart of the Croatian lifestyle, as you dine with two families in their homes, visit a rare stone-cutting school, enjoy cooking demonstration, language lessons, sip Croatian wine and more. And balance your cycling time with ample opportunities to swim or simply relax and enjoy the amenities of our wonderful, hand-picked accommodations.



Cultural Highlights

- Cycle along the harbor of Postira, a beautiful village nestled between ocean and hill, and embraced by centuries-old olive fields and pine groves.
- Enjoy views of the mainland across the water as you spin through quaint villages along a Brač

Island coastal road.

- Visit one of the world's last remaining stonecutting schools.
- Learn a few essential phrases during a Croatian language lesson.
- 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.”
- See how Brac Island settlements evolved from simple shepherds' homes.
- Take a dip in the Adriatic from Zlatni Rat, Croatia's most famous beach.
- Discover secrets of Croatian cuisine during a cooking demonstration.
- Visit a unique fortified church in the harbor town of Vrboska.
- Breeze through verdant countrysides of rolling fields, stone villages and port towns.

What to Expect

This tour offers a combination of rolling terrain and moderate-to-challenging hills and is ideal for energetic beginners to experienced cyclists. Our VBT support van is always available for those who would like it. Please be aware that there are multiple ferry rides to access the islands on this tour.

Tour Duration: 7 Days

Average Daily Mileage: 13 - 35

Average Cycling Time: 00:45 - 03:30

Group size: 22 max

Climate Information

Average High/Low Temperature (°F)

May 71°/56°, Jun 79°/63°, Jul 85°/67°, Aug 84°/67°, Sep 78°/61°, Oct 69°/54°

Average Rainfall (in.)

May 2.4, Jun 1.9, Jul 1.1, Aug 1.7, Sep 2.6, Oct 3.4

DAY 1: VBT Bicycle Vacation begins / Transfer from Trogir to the Island of Brac / Warm-up ride / Welcome Reception

VBT Bicycle Vacation Only guests: Your VBT Trip Leaders and the rest of the group meet you at the VBT Hotel in Trogir; hotel information will be given in your final documents. If you are scheduled to arrive at the VBT hotel in Trogir later than 9:00 a.m. or if you are delayed, you must take a taxi, a ferry and then another taxi to Hotel Pastura in Postira on the island of Brac at your own expense. (The approximate cost is 30 euros/\$39 USD; travel time approximately 2 hours.) Please contact Hotel Pastura (Telephone: +385 (0) 21 740 000) to advise the staff of any travel delays or changes, and they will alert your VBT Trip

Leaders.

VBT Air Package and Pre-Trip Extension guests: Meet your VBT Trip Leaders in the hotel lobby at 9:00 a.m. They will be wearing VBT staff garments. Please have your bags out for collection before 8:00 a.m. so they may be transferred to the ferry ahead of the group. The group will leave the hotel at 9:00 a.m. for the 45-minute drive to the Split pier for your ferry, which sails at 11:00 a.m. to the port of Supetar on the island of Brac.

On arrival at the port of Supetar, minivans transfer 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 ocean and hill, embraced by centuries-old olive fields and pine groves. One of this town's most famous sites is the remains of a basilica in Lovrecina, a bay with a very beautiful sandy beach.

After lunch on your own, join your Trip Leaders for a safety and bike-fitting session, followed by a short warm-up ride along Postira's harbor and a loop to the picturesque village of Dol.

In the early evening, transfer to the Village of Dol to a family owned castle for a welcome cocktail reception of homemade grappa on the quaint terrace, followed by a traditional Brac Island dinner. Later, return to the hotel and fall asleep to the lapping sounds of waves outside your room.

Hotel: Hotel Pastura

Meals: Dinner

Daily Options: 6.2 miles (9.9 km)

DAY 2: Cycle from Postira to Skrip and Pucisca / Visit stonecutters' school / Home-hosted dinner

This morning's ride will bring you to Skrip. Skrip is the oldest settlement on the island and the source of the stone used at the stonecutter school we will see this afternoon. After your visit, the ride to Pucisca follows the quieter road along the scenic north coast and passing through simple villages bordered by fig and olive trees. You'll enjoy views of the mainland across the water throughout our ride. Stop in the port town of Pucisca and visit the stonecutters' school here. Brac's world-renowned stone has been used in 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. Upon returning to the hotel, there'll be free time to relax or walk to the beach.

Just prior to dinner, your Trip Leaders provide an introduction to the Croatian language. Use your newfound skills tonight as you share a simple but authentic Croatian dinner in a local home. Connecting with your hosts during this event gives you a chance to witness daily life on this breathtaking island.

Hotel: Hotel Pastura

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Daily Options: 14, 20 or 35 miles (23.6, 33.8 or 49.8 km)

DAY 3: Vidova Gora / Rural villages / Milna

After breakfast, shuttle to the highest point on the island, Vidova Gora. This lookout, known as the summit of the Adriatic, affords some breathtaking views. From here, enjoy more great scenery as you coast through the villages of Nerezisca and Lozisca.

From Lozisca, ride a nine-mile loop 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 toward the port town of Sutivan and then along the coast back to your hotel in Postira via Supetar.

Tonight, you may explore the typical Croatian restaurants in town. Your Trip Leaders can make recommendations.

Hotel: Hotel Pastura

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Daily Options: 18, 29 or 35 miles (29.6, 48.2 or 58.2 km)

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

This morning, say goodbye to your hosts and transfer by coach across the top of the island to the base of Vidova Gora. From here, ride through easy terrain and the ancient medieval settlements of Praznica and Gornji Humac. These rustic island hamlets illustrate how the island's towns and villages developed from

separate homes, usually shepherds' houses.

Enjoy breathtaking views during your downhill roll to the beach of Zlatni Rat (meaning "Golden Horn"), the most famous beach in all of Croatia. This spit of land reaches out into the water with a gently sloping beach. Here, you can swim in the Adriatic's crystal-clear water before lunch on your own in the adjacent town of Bol.

Just after lunch, embark a private boat to Jelsa on the island of Hvar. Then, shuttle to your hotel in Hvar town. (In the event of inclement weather, this transfer 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 west 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 town with a strong Venetian influence dating to the 16th century. Visit the Arsenal, built in 1612 as the first municipal theater—Europe's oldest and perhaps smallest. Its purpose was to bring the aristocratic and bourgeois classes together, and it stands as a symbol of reconciliation between social classes and of the abolition of privilege—despite that women were not admitted until the second half of the 19th century. Take in the expanse of Saint Stephen's Square, the largest square of the Adriatic after Saint Mark's in Venice.

Tonight, walk to a nearby home for a delicious dinner. This festive dinner 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 travel between Brac and Hvar on the large car ferries that operate via Split. This creates a longer travel day. The two ferry rides are separated by a two-hour visit to Split, where you can take a discovery walk and enjoy lunch on your own.

Hotel: Hotel Park Hvar

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Daily Options: 10 miles (16.9 km)

DAY 5: Hvar / Stari Grad

After breakfast, you'll ride past fields of poppies, rosemary, and lavender. The ride starts with a steady climb of about four miles (6.5 km) to the village of Brusje and rewards you with a sparsely inhabited and dramatic landscape crisscrossed by a seemingly endless number of stone walls. Views stretch across the sea to neighboring islands and the mainland. If you prefer, start the ride in Brusje and pedal to Stari Grad, finishing with a four-mile (6.5 km) downhill coast into this authentic Dalmatian town situated at the end of a narrow bay. Originally founded in the fourth century BC, the 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. From Stari Grad, you will ride to Jelsa and climb toward Poljica into an even more remote environment, finishing with a two-mile (3 km) downhill ride to Velika Stiniva ("Big Cliff"), returning to Stari Grad. Board the VBT van for the shuttle back to your hotel.

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

Hotel: Hotel Park Hvar

Meals: Breakfast

Daily Options: 14, 26 or 29 miles (22.6, 43.8 or 48.6 km)

DAY 6: Vrboska/ Jelsa / Pitve / Brusje

Today's ride, certain to be a highlight of your trip, is relatively flat. It carries you through verdant fields and quiet stone villages and alongside the narrow harbor between Vrboska and Jelsa.

Your first destination is Vrboska, an adorable harbor town famous for its fortified church. Unique in Croatia, the structure resulted from a strange but urgent need for both the church and the secular citizenry to fortify their village from invaders. From here, you'll skirt a fjord on a flat and scenic road, perhaps stopping at a small cove for a cooling dip (don't forget your swimsuit!). End the morning with a picnic in the old fishing port of Jelsa, where you'll see the well-maintained houses of local ship captains. Enjoy a refreshing dip here.

Then, ride through the mountain village of Pitve. With its traditional stone houses, konobas (taverns) and

terraced gardens, Pitve epitomizes the island towns of Croatia. Shuttle back to the hotel from Stari Grad in the late afternoon, or opt for a longer ride that brings you back through Brusje to Hvar.

Tonight, enjoy a farewell dinner on the terrace of your hotel, overlooking Hvar.

Hotel: Hotel Park Hvar

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Daily Options: 10 or 32 miles (17.4 or 52.5 km)

DAY 7: Transfer to Split / Free time / VBT Bicycle Vacation ends

After breakfast, transfer back to the port of Split, arriving at approximately 1:15 p.m. (Important: Flight departures from the Split airport prior to 4:00 p.m. are not recommended. If you depart earlier, you must make transfer arrangements from the last hotel at your own expense. Taxi cost from Split harbor to Split airport is approximately 300 Croatian Kuna /\$60 USD; travel time is about 40 minutes.)

Hotel: Hotel Atrium

Meals: Breakfast