

## Croatia: The Dalmatian Islands

### Bike Vacation + Air Package

Cycle scenic coasts, port towns, and marinas during this exhilarating bike tour in Croatia. The narrow belt of Dalmatian islands are best experienced by bike, as you'll discover rustic island hamlets, pass fragrant fields of poppies, rosemary, and lavender, and pause to explore charming harbor villages. Feast on a homemade Brač Island dinner with a lovely local family in their home. In Pucisca, visit a stonecutter's school, where artisans craft stone used on world-class buildings like the White House and Diocletian's Palace. Soak in breathtaking views from Vidova Gora, known as the summit of the Adriatic. This is an island feast for the senses.



### 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 Brac 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:** 10 Days

**Average Daily Mileage:** 6 - 35

**Average Cycling Time:** 00:30 - 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: Depart from home / Fly overnight to Split

Depart from home for Croatia. The particulars of your arrival overseas are detailed with your flight itinerary.

## DAY 2: Arrive in Split, Croatia / Transfer to Trogir

Upon arrival at the Split airport, claim your luggage and clear customs. Our local representative, who will

be holding a VBT sign, meets you outside the customs area in your arrival terminal.

At the hotel, check in and spend the remainder of the day exploring Trogir. (If you arrive early, your hotel room may not be available until 2:00 p.m. You can store your luggage at the Reception Desk.)

On a tiny island behind medieval walls lies the Old Town of Trogir, just steps away from your hotel. Its streets form an intriguing maze, and Romanesque and Renaissance edifices wait around every corner. Masterful architecture and a magnificent cathedral have earned Trogir a place as a UNESCO World Heritage site. Outside the walls of the Old Town, you can stroll the seaside promenade, lined with cafés and luxurious yachts in the summer.

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

Hotel: Hotel Palace Trogir

Alternate Hotel: Brown Beach House Hotel & Spa

### **DAY 3: VBT Bicycle Vacation begins / Transfer from Trogir to the Island of Brac / Warm-up ride / Welcome Reception**

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, 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 a loop to the picturesque village of Dol. In the early evening, transfer to the Village of Dol for a welcome cocktail reception of homemade grappa on the restaurant's 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: Breakfast, Dinner

Today's Ride Choice:

Morning or Afternoon

Cumulative Distance Range: 4.7 – 9.9 km (2.9 – 6.2 miles)

Warm-Up Postira: 4.7 km (2.9 miles)

Warm-Up Postira and Dol: 9.9 km (6.2 miles)

What to Expect: Embark on a short warm-up ride along Postira's harbor and a loop to the picturesque village of Dol. It is a short, easy ride that will help you acclimate to your VBT bike for your week's riding. 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 with the use of this program.

## **DAY 4: 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 of 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 will introduce you 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

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 23.6 – 49.8 km (14 – 35 miles)

Morning

Postira to Skrip and Pucišca with Shuttle: 23.6 km (14 miles)

Postira to Skrip and Pucišca: 33.8 km (20 miles)

Afternoon

Pucišca to Postira: 49.8 km (35 miles)

What to Expect: This morning's easy ride is an uphill to the town of Skrip. After your visit, you will enjoy riding downhill and continuing on to Pucišca following a quieter road along the scenic north coast. This afternoon's ride takes you along the same scenic and costal road returning to the hotel.

## **DAY 5: 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 some breathtaking panoramas. 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

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 29.6 – 58.3 km (18 – 35.8 miles)

Morning

Vidova Gora to Milna: 29.6 km (18 miles)

Afternoon

Milna to Supetar: 18.5 km (11.5 miles)

Supetar to Postira: 10.2 km (6.3 miles)

What to Expect: After a short shuttle, enjoy beautiful scenery as you ride through quaint Croatian villages. You will experience slightly more hills than on previous days, but the support vehicle will always be available for support. From Lozisca, ride a nine-mile loop down to the port of Milna. The afternoon ride includes scenic stretches along the coast.

## **DAY 6: 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's 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

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 16.9 km (10 miles)

Morning or Afternoon

Praznica to Zlatni Rat Beach: 16.9 km (10 miles)

What to Expect: Today's ride is short, as you'll cruise to the island of Hvar in the afternoon. The morning's wonderful ride takes you along easy terrain and through ancient medieval settlements. Enjoy breathtaking views during your downhill roll down to the famous beach of Zlatni Rat.

## **DAY 7: 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 support vehicle 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

Today’s Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 22.6 – 46.3 km (14 – 28.7 miles)

Morning

Hvar to Brusje: 22.6 km (14 miles)

Afternoon

Stari Grad to Jelsa: 21.2 km (13.2 miles)

Stari Grad to Jelsa Plus: (23.7 km (14.7 miles)

What to Expect: Today’s ride starts with a steady climb of about four miles (6.5 km) to the village of Brusje. If you would prefer an easier ride, you may shuttle to Brusje and from there enjoy an easier ride to Stari Grad, finishing with a four-mile (6.5-km) downhill coast. In the afternoon bike to Jelsa, enjoy a stop at the beach for a swim. The return ride to Stari Grad takes you through vineyards and olive tree groves.

## **DAY 8: Vrboska/ Jelsa / Pitve / Brusje**

Today’s ride—certain to be a highlight of your bike tour of Croatia—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

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 17.4 – 52.5 km (10 – 32.6 miles)

Morning

Stari Grad to Vrboska and Jelsa: 17.4 km (10.8 miles)

Afternoon

Jelsa to Stari Grad: 13.7 km (8.5 miles)

Stari Grad to Hvar: 21.4 km (13.3 miles)

What to Expect: Today's morning ride is relatively flat and carries you through verdant fields and quiet stone villages, and alongside the narrow harbor between Vrboska and Jelsa. In the afternoon, choose from two routes, depending on whether you're up for a more moderate ride with hills or an easier option. Afternoon rides end in Stari Grad or in Hvar.

## **DAY 9: Transfer to Split / Free time / VBT Bicycle Vacation ends**

Transfer after breakfast by van and ferry to the port of Split, arriving around 1:15 p.m. (total travel time is approximately three hours). Your luggage will be transported separately, from the port you will walk approximately 20 minutes with one of our trip leaders 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 Split during your stay.

Hotel: Hotel Atrium – Air Package Guests

Alternate Hotel & Post Hotel: Cornaro Hotel

Meals: Breakfast

## **DAY 10: Depart for home**

After breakfast\* this morning, you will transfer to the Split airport for your departing flight. Please ensure you are ready in the hotel reception area at the designated transfer time\*\*.

\*Please note: For guests with early-morning departures, breakfast at the hotel may not be available. Please check with the front desk to verify the times that breakfast is served or request a boxed breakfast.

\*\*Please note: VBT recommends that you check your transfer time in your "Transfer Reminder." VBT transfer times and departure points are finalized in advance and cannot be modified for individual guests. If you extend your stay beyond the scheduled program dates, return transportation to the airport will be at your own expense.

Meals: Breakfast