

Croatia: The Dalmatian Islands

Bike Vacation Only

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 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 Brač 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 everyone from energetic beginners to experienced cyclists. Our VBT support vehicle is always available for those who would like a break from riding.

Tour Duration: 7 Days

Average Daily Mileage: 6 - 35

Average Cycling Time: 00:45 - 03:30

Climate Information

Average High/Low Temperature (°F)

Apr 63°/48°, May 71°/56°, Jun 79°/63°, Jul 85°/67°, Aug 84°/67°, Sep 78°/61°, Oct 69°/54°

Average Rainfall (in.)

Apr 2.6, 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 Brač / Warm-up ride / Welcome Reception

Your VBT trip leaders and the rest of the group meet you at the VBT hotel in Trogir. Your Trogir hotel information can be found on the Hotel Itinerary page of your final travel 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 Brač at your own expense. (The approximate cost is 30 euros/\$39 USD; travel time approximately two 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.

Special note: for guests who are already in Split, you may choose the option to meet your trip leaders at the ferry port in Split, no later than 10:10 a.m. Look for them in front of the entrance to the main Jadrolinija Building, next to the Ribola supermarket.

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. 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 Brač Island dinner. Later, return to the hotel and fall asleep to the lapping sounds of waves outside your room.

Hotel: Hotel Pastura

Meals: Dinner

Today's Ride Choice:

Cumulative Distance Range: 4.7 km (2.9 miles)

Afternoon Warm-Up Postira: 4.7 km (2.9 miles)

What to Expect: Embark on a short warm-up ride along Postira's harbor. 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 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 passes 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. Brač'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 – 30 miles)

Morning

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

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

Afternoon

Pucišća to Postira: 16 km (10 miles)

What to Expect: This morning's ride is an uphill to the town of Skrip. After your visit, you will enjoy riding downhill and continuing on to Pucišća 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 3: 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 Nerezisća and Lozisa.

From Lozisa, 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 a few hills, but the support vehicle will be available. From Lozisa, ride a nine-mile loop down to the port of Milna. The afternoon ride includes scenic stretches along the coast.

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

This morning, say goodbye to your hotel on Brač 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 Brač 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

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 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 on a pleasant loop ride to Jelsa. From Stari Grad, you will ride to Jelsa along the vineyards and olive groves of central Hvar. On the way back to Stari Grad, you can choose to challenge yourself by biking a hilly route or opt for a flat road. Upon returning to Stari Grad the support vehicle will shuttle you back to the hotel and your trip leaders will give you recommendations on how to spend the rest of the day on Hvar.

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: 23.6 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 6: 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 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.)

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

Hotel Pastura (Days: 1,2,3)

This 4-star hotel has 50 rooms spread throughout three buildings and is located right on Postira's beach. Hotel facilities include a freshwater swimming pool, a full-service restaurant, a bar, and a café bar. Other amenities include a business center, fitness center, sauna, Jacuzzi, and massage spa. Rooms feature a

balcony, air conditioning, satellite television, safe, and minibar.

Hotel Park Hvar (Days: 4,5,6)

Once the palace of the great Ivanic family in the 16th century, the Hotel Park Hvar is situated in the heart of Hvar town. You'll be treated royally in this 14-room boutique hotel. Thoroughly renovated in 2006, it is located between the former Rector's Palace and St. Mark's church and is close to the beach. Rooms feature partial views of the harbor and town, as well as air conditioning, heated floors, minibar, safe, LCD satellite TV, free WiFi, and private bath with shower. While here, you can also take advantage of the restaurant, the bar/lounge and the hotel's uniquely tranquil and intimate ambiance.