

# Croatia Bike & Boat: Split & the Dalmatian Islands, Aboard the Jadranska Kraljica

## Bike Vacation Only

Lose yourself amid the splendor of the Dalmatian Coast. On our Croatia bike tour, sail by private charter to a new and thrilling island every day, disembarking to cycle to charming fishing villages, medieval towns, breathtaking seaside vistas and hidden bays ideal for swimming. Along the way, stop to tour an organic olive farm on Korcula, witness the art of stonecutting at one of the last remaining schools, visit a fishing museum on Vis and share dinner with a local Hvar family in their home. Explore the beauty of Mljet National Park during an afternoon of kayaking, hiking or swimming. All while enjoying the convenience of your own ship, whose chef prepares island specialties and even shares his culinary skill during a hands-on cooking class.

## Cultural Highlights

Explore the medieval fortress and fascinating fishing museum in the tiny village of Komiža on the island of Vis.

Cycle into historic cities central to the past and culture of the Dalmatian Islands: Korcula, Hvar, Jelsa, Stari Grad, Postira, Pucisca.

Learn some Croatian cooking tips during a class with your onboard chef – and savor the results for dinner.

## 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. Biking is mainly on paved narrow country roads, with no dedicated bike paths. Most traffic is encountered while arriving and departing in port towns. Our VBT support van is always available for those who would like it. While the Adriatic is typically calm during the months that the tour is offered, if you are prone to motion sickness, you may wish to bring a prescription or over-the-counter remedy. Cabin sizes vary and cabins are assigned at random. Please note that depending on the weather conditions out to the sea, the captain has the right to change or swap the routes during the week and sail to a different port. In such cases VBT will offer optional rides and programs for those days.

**Tour Duration:** 8 Days

**Average Daily Mileage:** 9 - 35

**Average Cycling Time:** 00:30 - 03:15

## 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 / Travel to Trogir / Warm-up ride / Welcome reception and dinner

Meet your VBT trip leaders at the Cornaro Hotel in Split (6 Sinjska str. 21000 Split, phone +385 21 644 200) at 11:15 a.m. Your trip leaders will be wearing VBT staff garments. You shuttle the short distance with your fellow travelers to Trogir, where you embark the ship and have lunch on board. If you prefer, you can meet your group in the Old Town of Trogir. The ship *Jadranska Kraljica* (Adriatic Queen) will be moored at noon at Trogir Promenade, close to the Cioviski Bridge (phone +385 915 196814). Please contact the Hotel Cornaro in Split or the ship in Trogir to advise of any travel delays or changes, and the staff will pass your message on to your VBT trip leaders.

Your bike tour begins in Trogir. After lunch you check into your cabins and dress for biking. After a safety and bike-fitting session, set out on a scenic warm-up ride on Ciovo Island along quiet country roads lined with pine and cypress trees and surrounded by splendid vistas. It's an ideal preview of the island splendor to come. The longer option climbs a slight incline to the island's historic 12th-century monastery and a dramatic vista. Later, gather for a welcome cocktail and dinner on board. After dinner enjoy a short walk to discover the Old Town of Trogir, where your ship will be moored for the first night.

Accommodation: *Jadranska Kraljica* (Adriatic Queen)

Included Meals: Lunch, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 15 - 23 km (9 - 14 miles)

Afternoon

Warm-up: 15 km (9 miles)

Additional ride to the 12th century monastery and overlook: 8 km (5 miles)

What to Expect: An easy out-and-back ride on Ciovo Island on paved countryside roads. The longer ride includes a short incline to reach the island's overlook.

## DAY 2: Cruise to Vis Island / Loop island ride / Lunch at Rokis / Visit Komiža

Lift anchor early this morning and enjoy your first breakfast on board during a scenic coastal cruise to Vis, the farthest island from Croatia's shore inhabited by locals. The fishing heritage is rich here as Vis has long been isolated from other sources of livelihood. Today, an active viniculture also thrives on this relaxed, low-key island. You arrive late this morning and pedal along on a beautiful seaside route to Milna, where you might dive into the Adriatic for a swim at one of the many long, sandy beaches for which Vis is celebrated. Later, ride to the island's famed restaurant, Rokis, a casual eatery set in a traditional stone house typical of the Dalmatian Islands.

Later, cycle to the old fishing village of Komiža, set between dramatic green hills and the shimmering ocean. You visit the imposing St. George Fortress and the fishing museum for a glimpse of the region's rich past and seafaring ways. After, ride back to your ship over scenic hills, taking in breathtaking Adriatic vistas. If you prefer, get a lift from the shuttle and explore the town of Vis, perhaps visiting the Notre Dame Church or strolling to admire Renaissance summer houses built by the nobility. This evening, enjoy dinner on board. You moor overnight in Vis.

Accommodation: *Jadranska Kraljica* (Adriatic Queen)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 28 - 39 km (17 - 24 miles)

Morning

Vis to Komiža: 28 km (17 miles)

Afternoon

Komiža to Vis: 11 km (7 miles)

What to Expect: Ride quiet and fully paved country roads. The route features a couple of hills, especially during the afternoon ride. The support vehicle is available back to the ship if you prefer to pass on the afternoon ride.

## DAY 3: Cycle Korcula Island / Visit olive farm / Moreška performance

A three-hour sailing this morning delivers you to Vela Luka (meaning "big harbor") on the splendid island of Korcula. Not only is this one of the most beautiful Dalmatian islands; it is also beloved for the golden-hued Grk wine produced at its vineyards. Your morning ride leads you into a stunning landscape of karst hills to one side and glittering Adriatic waters to the other. Some hill climbing brings you to spectacular

lookout points. Your destination is a working olive farm, lush with gnarly olive trees that have grown here in the Adriatic sun for generations. Pause to visit with the owners and enjoy a tour of its ethnographic collection of olive presses, learning about the island's long tradition of harvesting. Later, you stop for a traditional Croatian lunch at the family-owned Konopica restaurant. Sample the homemade Uštipci bread, sip a local Pošip wine and perhaps enjoy a local octopus peka, a traditional dish slow-cooked under a cast-iron dome-shaped baking lid. (Have your trip leader call the day before as it takes many hours to prepare.)

After lunch, continue cycling to Grad Korcula, the island's cultural center and alleged birthplace of Marco Polo. This fascinating town was laid out in a herringbone configuration on a scenic promontory. The resulting grid allows for easy air flow and protects its citizens from strong mistral winds in the warm summers. All its narrow streets are stepped, except the Street of Thoughts, so called because there's no need to watch your footing as you stroll.

Dinner is on your own this evening. You're sure to find the ideal spot in Grad Korcula, affectionately called "mini Dubrovnik" for its authentic medieval atmosphere. Later, you may attend a Moreška performance, an exciting sword dance depicting a battle between Croats and Moors. Your ship docks in Grad Korcula tonight.

Accommodation: *Jadranska Kraljica* (Adriatic Queen)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 8 – 52 km (7 - 32 miles)

Morning

Vela Luka to Konopica: 28 km (17 miles)

Afternoon

Konopica to Korcula: 24 km (15 miles)

What to Expect: Today features your trip's highest mileage and most elevation gain. You cycle all paved country roads with limited traffic. The VBT support vehicle is available.

## **DAY 4: Cycle the Pelješac Peninsula / Sail to Mljet Island / Explore Mljet National Park**

Sail this morning to the mainland and the scenic Pelješac Peninsula. This finger of land pointing into the Adriatic has been compared to Tuscany for its wine production. Upon arrival, you join a shuttle to Donja

Banda to begin a magnificent morning of cycling amid dramatic landscapes. You first stop in the village of Kuna at a donkey farm, the Antunovic Family Farm. Meet the proprietors during your visit and learn about their breeding program and their surrounding vineyards – and of course, meet the long-eared residents!

Continue to the Matuško winery in the tiny village of Potomje. Tour this scenic spot overlooking the sea and perhaps sample some of its smooth olive oil and its renowned Dingac wine, made from Plavac mali grapes. After, you return to the ship and set out for Mljet Island, enjoying lunch on board.

Your focus this afternoon is the spectacular Mljet National Park, comprising all of the island's northwestern region. Surrounded by turquoise waters and cloaked in forest and shrub, it is deserving of a closer look. You leave the bicycles on board and have the afternoon at leisure to swim, kayak or hike along its pristine shores. This evening, enjoy a wine- and olive-tasting on board, followed by dinner. You moor tonight at Mljet.

Accommodation: *Jadranska Kraljica* (Adriatic Queen)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today's Ride Choice:

Cumulative Distance Range: 26 km (16 miles)

Morning

Donja Banda to Zuljana: 26 km (16 miles)

What to Expect: Upon docking on the mainland, take a short van shuttle to skip the busy traffic and uphill climbs. The remainder of the ride follows mainly flat or downhill routes on quiet and paved country roads. There is no biking on Mljet Island in the afternoon.

## **DAY 5: Ride the Viganj coast / Picnic and swim at Podobuce / Sail to Hvar**

Depart Mljet this morning and sail toward the end of the Pelješac Peninsula to Viganj, perhaps spotting windsurfers catching the mistral winds. Back on the mainland, you disembark for a scenic out-and-back ride along the breathtaking coastline. For lunch, you stop in Podobuce, a pretty fishing village, for a picnic prepared by your trip leaders. There'll be time for a swim here, too, before you return to the ship.

Back on board, you cruise to Hvar. Celebrated as the most beautiful island in the world, it is a wonderland of lavender fields, fruit orchards, fragrant pine forests and superb beaches. You'll have the chance to take it all in when you cycle among its pristine vistas tomorrow. For now, you moor in one of the scenic bays

outside Hvar Town. Later, join a cooking class on board to learn from the chef how to prepare a favorite Croatian dish that you savor for dinner.

Accommodation: *Jadranska Kraljica* (Adriatic Queen)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 38 km (24 miles)

Morning

Viganj to Podobuce: 19 km (12 miles)

Afternoon

Podobuce to Viganj: 19 km (12 miles)

What to Expect: Ride along well-paved country roads today. The area outside Viganj can be busy with traffic during the main tourist season, but most of your ride follows very quiet and scenic roads along the seacoast. Today's ride features two remarkable hills. The support vehicle is available should you need assistance throughout the day.

## **DAY 6: Explore Hvar Town / Cycle to Stari Grad / Home-hosted dinner in Jelsa**

Disembark after breakfast for a short walk in Hvar Town, a medieval Croatian settlement with a strong Venetian influence dating back to the 16th century. Take in the expanse of Saint Stephen's Square, the largest Adriatic square after Saint Mark's in Venice. And see the Arsenal, built in 1612 as Europe's oldest and perhaps smallest municipal theater.

After, ride past Hvar's stunning panoramas of fertile fields filled with flowers and herbs and dramatic, sparsely inhabited landscape crisscrossed by stone walls. You can admire views across the sea to neighboring islands and the mainland. The road into Stari Grad, a charming Dalmatian town situated at the end of a narrow bay, is a glorious four-mile (6.5 km) downhill coast. Originally founded in the fourth century BC, Stari Grad (literally "old town") features a main square which offers a number of options for lunch on your own. Get acquainted with this gem of a town during an orientation walk. There'll be free time to explore on your own.

Continue biking a pleasant road into Jelsa, passing vineyards and olive groves. A local Jelsa family welcomes you into their village, and into their home. You are their guests this evening for a home-prepared dinner and wine. You'll find there's no better way to connect with the people of the Dalmatian

islands than over a shared meal. Your ship meets you in Jelsa at day's end and will remain moored here tonight.

Accommodation: *Jadranska Kraljica* (Adriatic Queen)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 22 - 35 km (14 – 22 miles)

Morning

Hvar to Stari Grad: 22 km (14 miles)

Afternoon

Stari Grad to Jelsa: 13 km (8 miles)

What to Expect: Today's ride starts with a steady climb of about four miles out of Hvar Town. Follow coastal roads to Stari Grad, where trip leaders escort you on a short orientation walk and point out choices for lunch on your own. In the afternoon, continue riding to Jelsa on mostly quieter country roads. Two moderate hills reward you with splendid views. The support vehicle is available should you need assistance throughout the day.

## **DAY 7: Cycle Brac Island / Visit stonecutter's school / Sail to Trogir / Captain's Farewell dinner**

This morning, cruise into the beautiful bay of Pucišća. This tiny enclave on the island of Brac is considered one of the prettiest villages in Europe. Disembark here and visit one of the world's few remaining stonecutting schools. The stone that is carved here, quarried from nearby Skrip, has been used to build 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.

After an enlightening visit, cycle the northern coast of the island to the 14th-century village of Postira, nestled between the ocean and hillsides. On the way, you pass centuries-old olive and pine groves. Continue to Supetar, the island's main port, where you meet your ship for lunch on board. After lunch, you may extend your riding day with a spin to Milna, a charming village on a bay settled by shepherds in the 16th century. Keep your ears open for the local Chakavian dialect, the only place on the island where the ancient Slavic language is spoken.

Rejoin your ship here, then sail back to Trogir, where your trip began. This evening, join the captain for a

special farewell dinner, recounting your favorite moments from your cycling adventure among the magnificent Dalmatian Islands.

Accommodation: *Jadranska Kraljica* (Adriatic Queen)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 24 - 42 km (15 – 26 miles)

Morning

Pucišća to Supetar: 24 km (15 miles)

Afternoon

Supetar to Milna: 18 km (11 miles)

What to Expect: Today's ride starts in Pucišća and follows the north coast of Brac to Postira and Supetar, passing ancient groves of olive and pine trees. Meet your ship in Supetar for lunch, then join the longer option for a moderate ride to Milna, following quieter country roads and climbing a few hills.

## **DAY 8: Travel to Dubrovnik / Free time / VBT Bicycle Vacation ends**

After breakfast, your biking tour ends in Trogir. Our trip leaders will help you to arrange a taxi to the nearby airport or to Split to continue with your own travel plans.

Included Meals: Breakfast

## **Accommodations**

May vary depending on departure date.

### **Jadranska Kraljica (Days: 1,2,3,4,5,6,7)**

With generous deck space and modern comforts, the *Jadranska Kraljica*, which means "Adriatic Queen" in English, is ideally suited to take in the beauty of the stunning Dalmatian Islands. With a length of just 130 feet (40 meters) and a width of 27 feet (8 meters), this small ship was one of the first steel boats built in Croatia and can deliver you to small, intimate ports rich in island character, ideal starting points for exploring the islands by bike. Aboard this private VBT charter, enjoy meals prepared by your chef in the intimate dining area, and relax in the ship's bar. Each of the air-conditioned cabins provides a private



bathroom with a shower. Note that on some islands, the ship will proceed to meet you at your cycling destination, and you will rejoin it at the ride's end.