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SLOVENIA, CROATIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA WITH VENICE AND VIENNA

9 days / 8 nights

Discovering Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina with a touch of Venice and Vienna

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- Cross over bridges of Venice
- Enjoy the charming capital, Ljubljana and head to Slovenia's gem, lake Bled, located in the heart of the Julian Alps
- Discover the picturesque nature of Croatian Plitvice national park
- Experience Split with its remarkable Diocletian palace
- Visit Bosnian Mostar, a city victim of recent ethnical clash
- Explore the winding alleys of walled Old town of Dubrovnik, the pearl of the Adriatic
- Get to know Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Conclude the tour in beautiful Vienna

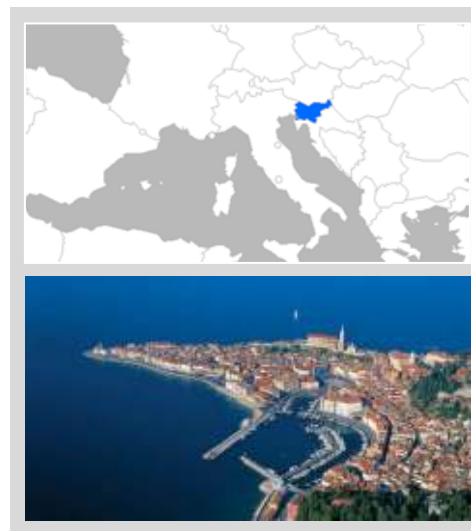


GENERAL INFORMATION

SLOVENIA

The country of Slovenia lies in the heart of the enlarged Europe. It has a border with Italy, Austria, Hungary and Croatia. The capital Ljubljana is a modern, fresh, young, creative and surprising city.

Slovenia, a green and diverse country between the Alps and the Mediterranean, boasts all the beauties of the Old World. When you want to experience Europe in one stroke, come to Slovenia. In just 20,273 square kilometres there are snow-covered mountains, a sea coast bathing in the Mediterranean sun, beautiful karst caves and thermal springs, narrow white-water canyons and wide slow moving rivers, high mountain lakes and lakes that disappear mysteriously underground at the start of summer, ancient villages and medieval cities, the antique castles and modern entertainment, countless vineyards with top quality wines, and the only primeval forest in Europe. Here in this small and easily covered area, where hundreds of birds migrating south make a briefly stop and where dozens of unique indigenous plants find their home, more diverse experiences await you all year round than can be found anywhere else.



CROATIA

Travelling through Croatia, Dalmatia or Dubrovnik Region offers immense and rich experiences to every visitor. From the coastal to the continental parts, Croatia's rich cultural heritage, combined with its magnificent natural beauties, make it the perfect place to spend your vacation at. The capital of Croatia is Zagreb, a charming medieval city of exceptional beauty known for its spirit and architecture, with a population of approximately 1 million.

The uniqueness of Croatia lies in its diversity. Situated between the Alps and the Adriatic Sea, Croatia provides visitors with the opportunity to ski in the winter and swim during the summer months, all within driving distance. With its 1.185 islands, islets and reefs, it is the most diverse coast on the Mediterranean.

There are seven national parks in Croatia, three being in the mountainous regions (Risnjak, Paklenica and Plitvicka Jezera), and four in the coastal regions (Kornati, Brijuni, Krka and Mljet). To mention a few, Croatia is home to the Old City of Dubrovnik, Diocletian's Palace in Split, Euphrasies Basilica in Porec, and many others. Croatia boasts the largest number of developed settlements in southeast Europe, in addition, many of which date back to Roman and medieval times. Rarely can you find so many examples of cultural and historical significance from different periods in such a small region.



BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Bosnia and Herzegovina is one of the last undiscovered regions of the southern area of the Alps, with vast tracks of wild and untouched nature attracting adventurers and nature lovers. According to an estimation of the World Tourism Organization, Bosnia and Herzegovina will have the third highest tourism growth rate in the world between 1995 and 2020.

Most notable among its charms is its lush, mountainous landscape, best seen from the vantage point of one of the national parks. The central Dinaric Alps are favoured by hikers & walkers, containing both Mediterranean & Alpine climates. White-water rafting with 3 rivers (including the deepest river canyon in Europe, Tara River) is something akin to a national pastime. Bosnia has also become an increasingly popular skiing and Ecotourism destination. For some, the country remains synonymous with the Yugoslav wars that ravaged the Balkan region in the 1990s; it still bears the legacy of this, having a fractured infrastructure and a countryside that remains littered with mines in some regions.

However, there are plenty of positives to take from Bosnia and Herzegovina's urban centres, especially the cosmopolitan capital of Sarajevo with its Turkish heritage and lively cafe scene. Lonely Planet, in ranking the best cities in the



world, ranked Sarajevo ahead of Croatian Dubrovnik. Tourism there is chiefly focused on historical, religious, and cultural aspects. Elsewhere there are historic fortresses, splendid old mosques, monasteries and Catholic shrines to enjoy. But perhaps above all else, it is the reconstructed Ottoman bridge at Mostar that symbolizes both the past and a positive new beginning for the country.

ITALY

Italy is located in Southern Europe and comprises the boot-shaped Italian Peninsula and a number of islands including the two largest, Sicily and Sardinia and about 70 other smaller ones. Italy is mainly mountainous, except for the Po plain in the north, and runs from the Alps to the central Mediterranean Sea. There are two small independent states within peninsular Italy: the Vatican City in Rome, and the Republic of San Marino.

Rome, the capital of Italy, has for centuries been a political and religious centre of Western civilisation as the capital of the Roman Empire and site of the Holy See. All this left a huge archaeological, cultural and literary heritage; the Italian peninsula saw the birth of medieval humanism and the Renaissance. This further helped to shape European political thought, philosophy and art via figures like Machiavelli, Dante, Leonardo da Vinci and Galileo.

Modern Italy is a democratic republic. It has been ranked as the world's 24th most-developed country and its Quality-of-life Index has been ranked in the world's top ten in 2005.

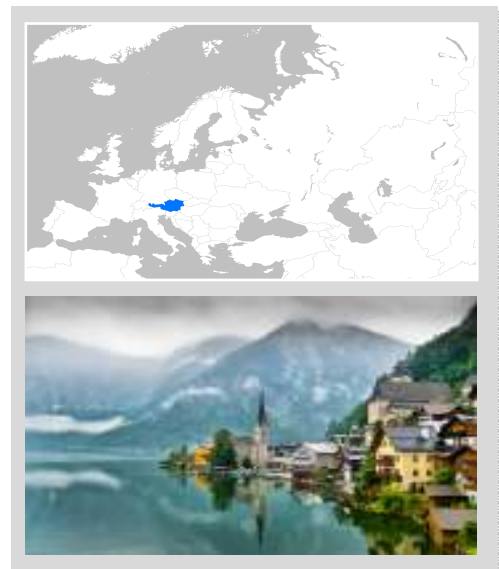
It is the world's fifth most visited country and boasts a long tradition in the arts, science and technology, including the world's highest number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

AUSTRIA

Austria is a landlocked country situated in southern Central Europe. Slightly smaller than Maine, it occupies a territory of approximately 84,000 square kilometers), which includes much of the mountainous territory of the eastern Alps and the Danube region. Forests and woodlands cover about 40% of the land. Austria has always been a junction for communication, trade, and cultural exchange in Europe.

History of this country (as a European power) and its cultural environment have generated a broad contribution to various forms of art, most notably among them music. It has been the birthplace of many famous composers such as Joseph Haydn, Franz Liszt, Franz Schubert, Johann Strauss and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

Because of its wealth of cultural and recreational facilities—including historical sites and winter and summer resorts in the spectacular mountains—Austria has a large tourism industry, which acts as a major earner of foreign exchange. Heritage is all the things that make up Austria's identity - spirit and ingenuity, historic buildings, and unique, living landscapes. Heritage is a legacy from past, a living, integral part of life today, and the stories and places that are passing on to future generations.



SUGGESTED ITINERARY

DAY 1

Arrival to Venice airport
Meet and greet at the airport and drive to the city
Check-in to a hotel
Free for dinner
Overnight in Venice



DAY 2

Breakfast in the hotel and check-out
A sightseeing tour of Venice
Free for lunch in a local restaurant
Drive to Portoroz
Check-in to a hotel and free for dinner
Overnight in Portoroz



VENICE – a city on the water

Venice is arguably Italy's most beautiful and romantic city, built on the water in a lagoon. It's composed by 117 islands connected by more than 400 bridges over its 150 canals. Since horses were banned in 1392, almost all activity takes place on the water. There are no big avenues or streets, only small lanes and squares, which make this city so special.



DAY 3

Breakfast in the hotel and check-out
Drive to Postojna (72km) and visit the caves
Free for lunch
Continue to Bled (106km)
Ride by pletna boat and visit Bled Castle
Drive to Ljubljana (58km)
Free for dinner
Overnight in Ljubljana



MARVELLOUS POSTOJNA CAVES – the most visited caves in Europe

The Postojna cave system is the largest known cave system in Slovenia. A visit to a cave such as Postojna deserves full attention due to the diversity of shapes, expansive cave areas, stalactite and stalagmite formations and water characteristics. Admire its unique Karst underground world of beautiful formations of stalactites and stalagmites. You can also see an unusual and rare underground animal Proteus Anguinus - the so-called "human fish". A visit to Postojna cave is a special experience, as an electric train takes visitors to their hour and a half circle tour visit to the cave. From train station inside the cave guides accompany visitors as they walk amongst magnificent creations of nature.



BLED – Alpine pearl of Slovenia

The picture-postcard of the Alpine town of Bled was once the preferred choice of the Austro Hungarian Empire's elite. Its many charms include a medieval castle, perched high on a rocky cliff, a scenic lake studded by a tiny wooded island, and the alpine splendour of the nearby Triglav National Park, a natural wonderland of glacial valleys, glittering peaks, limestone canyons, ice-cold tarns, flowered meadows, Alpine forests, pretty hamlets and cascading waterfalls. It is a tourist place, surrounded by the wreaths of the Julian Alps and Karavanke Mountains, placed in a dish shaped basin of a glacial lake, the warmest in Europe.

LJUBLJANA – a charming mixture of styles of Central Europe

One of Europe's best-kept secrets, the ancient walled city of Ljubljana lies at the very heart of Slovenia and boasts a vibrant history that traces 3,000 years of Roman, Medieval, Baroque and Italian influences. A friendly and cosmopolitan city Ljubljana offers a broad selection of diversions that range from strolling the shimmering reaches of the Ljubljana River to exploring the formal gardens and fortified battlements of the city. There are also the cobbled streets of the Old town and a bright café society to be enjoyed plus plenty of atmospheric bars, a broad range of regional restaurants and a host of cultural events.



DAY 4

Breakfast in the hotel and check-out
Drive to Plitvice National Park (284km)
Free for lunch
Continue to Zadar (149km)
Check-in to a hotel
Free for dinner
Overnight in Zadar

PLITVICE - a misty natural wonderland

Located in a deep mysterious ancient forest known as the "Devil's Garden" between Zagreb and Zadar lies Plitvice Lakes National Park, composed of 19.5 hectares of woods, lakes and waterfalls. Imagine Niagara Falls diced and sprinkled over a heavily forested Grand Canyon. This lush valley of terraced lakes is laced together by waterfalls and miles of pleasant wooden-plank walks. It is one of Croatia's top sights and the oldest national park in Europe, deservedly listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1979. Countless cascades and strangely clear and colourful water make the Plitvice Lakes National Park a misty natural wonderland.

ZADAR – the city with 3000 years long history

Zadar has been for centuries the capital city of Dalmatia, but today it is the centre of the region. City's rich heritage of world importance can be visible at every step. A visitor can be easily impressed by the Roman Forum from the 1st century or St. Donatus' Church from the 9th century – the most famous medieval basilica and trademark of the city; The reconstructed Romanesque St. Grisigono's Church from the 12th century and the St. Mary's bell tower from the year 1105; the St. Anastasia's Cathedral from the 13th century; the People's Square with the City's Lodge and Guardhouse from the 16th century, as well as the mighty fortification walls with first class Sea (farer's) and Land gates from the 16th century followed by the Three and Five Wells Squares and many palaces, villas and other historic monuments.



DAY 5

Breakfast in the hotel and check-out
Drive to Split (157km)
A sightseeing tour around Split
Free for lunch
Continue to Dubrovnik (230km)
A visit of the city
Check-in to a hotel
Free for dinner
Overnight in Dubrovnik

SPLIT – the cultural and economic center of Dalmatia

Split is the largest and most important town in Dalmatia. The town was developed around the palace, which was erected in the 4th century by the Roman Emperor, Diocletian. You can also visit the ancient cellars, Cathedral, Temple of Jupiter and the Golden Gate.

The town of Split is situated in the central part of the eastern Adriatic coast and is bordered by the mouths of the small river Ærnovnica in the Southeast, and the river Jadro in the North. Split offers you its many charms; the pines of the Marjan forest in the Western part of the peninsula, the murmur of the sea and the sound of the Dalmatian song in the stone streets of the city. Split has a very favourable climate characterized by an extremely bright sky with about 2,700 sunny hours per year.

DUBROVNIK – the pearl of the Adriatic

The city of Dubrovnik is situated in the very South of the Republic of Croatia. The particularity and uniqueness of Dubrovnik is in its permanent live connection to its rich past and its cultural heritage, while it keeps vibrantly in pace with contemporary life, echoing its spiritual identity and its presence in the European cultural environment. Dubrovnik, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site, is rich in cultural and historical monuments.

The most recognizable feature which defines the History of Dubrovnik and gives it its characteristic are its intact city walls which run uninterrupted for 1940 meters encircling the city. This complex structure, one of the most beautiful and strongest fort systems in the Europe is the main attraction for the city's visitors. This is a tour which will show you the finest sites of the Old Walled City and will reveal why Dubrovnik is often referred to as the "Pearl of the Adriatic". We will lead you through the streets of the Old Town introducing you to the history and culture of this magnificent city. Other splendid buildings such as Onofrio's Fountain, St. Blaise's Church, Sponza Palace will be viewed along the way. You will be able to visit the Franciscan Monastery with Europe's oldest pharmacy, the Cathedral with its famous Treasury and the Rector's Palace which once used to be the seat of the government in the Dubrovnik Republic.



DAY 6

Breakfast in the hotel and check-out
Drive to Mostar (140km)
A sightseeing tour around Mostar
Free for lunch
Continue to Sarajevo (127km) with a sightseeing tour
Check-in to a hotel
Free for dinner
Overnight in Sarajevo



MOSTAR – the city with the largest population of Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina

Mostar is the biggest and the most important city in the Herzegovina region in the republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is situated on the Neretva River and is the fifth-largest city in the country. Mostar was named after "the bridge keepers" (natively: mostari) who guarded the Stari Most (Old Bridge) over the river. The bridge was ruined during the war and then rebuilt in 2004. Today it is one of the city's most recognizable landmarks. Together with the Old town became a listed UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site. The Old Town with its towers, oriental shops, and restaurants, which are specialized in aromatic cooking, take you back for many centuries. Traces of 'old' times are imprinted in the market, the mosques, Herzegovina's museum and in the typical Turkish houses, a few of which have been kept in original style.

The city excels in the spheres of art, cuisine, music, theatre, museums, and literature. It is also widely celebrated in popular lore, featured frequently as the setting for books, movies, and television programs.

SARAJEVO – the capital and the largest city of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Sarajevo is one of the most historically interesting cities in Europe. It is the place where the Western & Eastern Roman Empire split; where the people of the Eastern Orthodox, the Southern Ottoman and the Western Roman Catholic met, lived and warred. It has been an example of historical turbulence and the clash of civilizations, as well as a beacon of hope for peace and tolerance through multi-cultural integration.

Today the city has physically recovered from most of the war damage caused by the Yugoslav Wars of the early nineties. It is a cosmopolitan European capital with a unique Eastern twist that is a delight to visit. The people are very friendly, be they Bosnian, Serb, or Croat.



DAY 7

Breakfast in the hotel and check-out
Drive to Zagreb (373km) with a stop in Banja Luka for a visit
Free for lunch
Continue to Zagreb
A sightseeing tour of Zagreb
Check-in to a hotel
Free for dinner
Overnight in Zagreb

ZAGREB – the capital and the largest city of Croatia

Zagreb is the capital city of the Republic of Croatia. For centuries it has been a focal point of culture and science, and now became a centre of commerce and industry as well. Zagreb is also the hub of the business, academic, cultural, artistic and sporting worlds in Croatia. Many famous scientists, artists and athletes come from the city, or work in it. The city boasts a charming medieval 'old city' with architecture and cobbled streets reminiscent of Vienna, Budapest, Prague and other Central-European capitals, though mixed with a strong Italian influence. It can offer its visitors the Baroque atmosphere of the Upper Town, picturesque open-air markets, diverse shopping facilities, an abundant selection of crafts and a choice vernacular cuisine.

Zagreb is a city of green parks and walks, with many places to visit in the beautiful surroundings. In spite of the rapid development of the economy and transportation, it has retained its charm, and a relaxed feeling that makes it a genuinely human city.



DAY 8

Breakfast in the hotel and check-out
Drive to Vienna (373km)
A sightseeing tour of Vienna
Free for lunch
Check-in to a hotel
Free for dinner
Overnight in Vienna

VIENNA – the city of dreams

Vienna is capital and by far the largest city in Austria. It is cultural, economic, and political centre. Apart from being regarded as the City of Music because of its musical legacy, Vienna is also said to be "The City of Dreams" because it was home to the world's first psycho-analyst - Sigmund Freud. The City's roots lie in early Celtic and Roman settlements that transformed into a Medieval and Baroque city, the capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Historic centre of Vienna is rich in architectural ensembles, including Baroque castles and gardens, as well as the late-19th-century Ringstrasse lined with grand buildings, monuments and parks.



DAY 9

Breakfast in the hotel and check-out
Transfer to the airport of Vienna for your departure flight

SERVICES

SERVICES INCLUDED:

TRANSFERS:

Air conditioned comfortable vehicle through the entire tour

ACCOMMODATION (in DBL or SGL room, breakfast included):

1 night in 4*/5* hotel in Venice, 1 night in 4*/5* hotel in Portoroz, 1 night in 4*/5* hotel in Ljubljana, 1 night in 4* /5*hotel in Zadar, 1 night in 4*/5* hotel in Dubrovnik, 1 night in 4*/5* hotel in Sarajevo, 1 night in 4*/5* hotel in Zagreb and 1 night in 4*/5* hotel in Vienna

GUIDES:

English speaking guide through the entire tour including meals and accommodation. Local guides for visits in Venice, Zadar, Mostar, Sarajevo, Split, Dubrovnik Zagreb and Vienna

ENTRANCE FEES:

Postojna caves, Bled castle and Pletna boat ride to St. Mary church, Plitvice National Park, Diocletian cellars and palace in Split, Cathedral, Rector's palace and Franciscan Monastery in Dubrovnik

OTHER:

Organization of the tour and VAT

SERVICES EXCLUDED:

- Services not mentioned in the program
- Meals unless where specified
- Porterage
- Tips