

Croatia & Slovenia

The Green Wonderland

Seven-night tour: 1 night in Zagreb, 2 nights in Bled, 3 nights in Rovinj, 1 night in Zagreb

HIGHLIGHTS

ZAGREB - the capital of tie

BLED - the pearl of Julian Alps

BOHINJ - the valley of Gods

LJUBLJANA - small city with a vibrant atmosphere

ISTRIA - mystical land of alluring aromas

BRIJUNI - pieces of heaven...

PLITVICE - the green fairytale

EXTRAORDINARY EXPERIENCES

- Private tour of the Mimara Museum in Zagreb with museum's Curator
- Private wine tasting in Otočec Castle in Slovenia
- Riding lessons in Lipica Stud Farm in Slovenia on the back of the famous Lipizzaners
- Private truffle hunting demonstration in Istria with a local farmer and his sniffer dog

DAY 1: ZAGREB

Arrival to Zagreb airport; flight details TBA.

Meet your driver for a private transfer to the luxury hotel of The Regent Esplanade - an elegant hotel situated in the heart of historic Zagreb. In the afternoon, meet your local guide at the lobby for a private sightseeing tour of the historic core of **Zagreb**. The capital of Croatia illustrates both the continental and the Mediterranean spirit of the nation it spearheads. This is a city with tumultuous history, warm and inviting, and it will surely fulfill all your expectations. The façades of Zagreb's buildings reflect the ebb and flow of history, while its streets and squares bear witness to the coming together of the many cultures that have shaped its identity. Your guide will take you for a walk from Zrinjevac, through the avenues of trees and flowers to the main city square of Ban Jelacic, the heart of the city. You will continue the tour to the Upper Town and its mediaeval twin settlements: secular Gradec and ecclesiastical Kaptol, both preserved till today. You will discover its cobblestone streets, mediaeval towers, the vivacious green market;



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old houses and churches (Cathedral of Mary's Assumption in the neo-gothic style, St. Mark's church with the beautiful multi-colored roofs decorated with Croatian historical coats of arms...). Then you will continue by funicular or walk to the Lower Town, dominated by the impressive building of the Croatian National Theatre. The neo-baroque edifice is surrounded by numerous Art Nouveau buildings that represent Croatian architecture of the end of the

19th and the beginning of the 20th century. As a perfect ending of your tour, we will take you for a **CALVADOS CLUB Extraordinary Experience: Visit Mimara Museum with the Museum's Curator.** Mimara Museum is located in the neo-renaissance palace from 19th century and abounds in pieces of art, icons, statues and other exhibits of art from around the world, from ancient times to 19th century.

Spend the rest of afternoon at your leisure in the Lower Town where you will enjoy the charming ambiance of the streets full of boutiques, cafes and bookshops. We recommend you to visit the origin cravat fashion shop "Croata" where you may buy origin Croata cravats, scarves and neckties because you are in homeland of cravat. Overnight in Zagreb.

DAY 2: ZAGREB - TRAKOŠČAN - OTOČEC - BLED

This morning meet your guide and driver for your private full day tour from Zagreb, through Trakošćan and Otočec castles, to Bled. After a 1-hour ride you will arrive to **Trakošćan Castle**. Sitting upon a hill and facing its reflection in the lake underneath, the castle leads us into a true fairy tale. A stunning neo-gothic castle dates all the way back in the 1334, when it was only a fortification of Trakošćan. It changed quite a few hands throughout the history and was finally inherited by the count Janko Drašković, who decided to build himself a summer residence. Walking through the halls furnished with Renaissance, Baroque, Rococo and neo-classicistic pieces, with stoves and mirrors, you will be able to reconstruct a whole world gone by.

Then you will continue to Slovenia and **Otočec Castle**, an extraordinary Gothic - Renaissance property where you will enjoy a private wine tasting.



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Later this afternoon, you will arrive to Bled and your hotel – Vila Bled – charming boutique situated on the beautiful Bled Lake.

With its traditional style reminiscent of the 1950' and unique historic ambience, it is a favorite retreat from everyday life.

DAY 3: BLED & BOHINJ tour

This morning meet your private guide and driver for a full day exploration of Bled and Bohinj. Sheltered by picturesque mountains, the town of **Bled** reigns in the middle of an Alpine lake. Cosmopolitan seekers of diversity and beauty find their inspiration in the tranquil surroundings of Bled, its cultural treasures and natural wonders. Your guide will take for a walk around the lake and a traditional boat ride to the tiny island on the lake. That is where the ancient Slavs worshipped Živa, goddess of love and fertility. You will also visit the baroque Church of the Assumption, which stands in the middle of an islet. Your guide and driver will take you the beautiful **Bled Castle**, which the oldest castle in the country. The image of the castle forms a dramatic backdrop to the romantic island and the church on it and lures you to explore its rich cultural legacy. Today the castle is preserved as a museum, where you will be able to discover various exhibits depicting the history of the region. Enjoy the spectacular view over the lake and the mountains before you guide and driver take you to Bohinj.

Bohinj is an idyllic alpine valley surrounded by an amphitheatre of mountains reflected in the crystal-clear lake. The legend about Bohinj says that the gods thought of it as the most beautiful part of the world. So when the gods were dividing the world among people, there was a small group standing by the side and not struggling to get to the front. The gods took pity of them, seeing how patient and modest they were.

Therefore they gave them the most beautiful part of their own world. That part is now called Bohinj – after God, who is called “boh” by the local people. You will discover the natural beauty of the green forests and meadows, the cultural and historical monuments and the friendly villages of the valley, all overshadowed by the sombre face of high mountains. The journey continues with a cable car ride to the mountain Vogel (5.000 ft), from where



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there is a spectacular view of the lake and the Julian Alps. Overnight in Bled.

DAY 4: BLED - LJUBLJANA - LIPICA - ROVINJ



This morning meet your guide and driver for a private tour of Ljubljana and Lipica that will end in Rovinj, in the region of Istria.

Ljubljana is known to be one of the smallest and most charming European capitals, whose name means „the beloved“. The city combines facilities and efficiency of a metropolis and the relaxed ambiance of a small town. Its young and vibrant pulse lures one to wander around the cobblestone streets with numerous cafes,

galleries, parks and green areas. You will explore the city center with your guide, starting from the Baroque Town Hall building, to the Town Square with the famous Fountain of the Tree Rivers and the funicular ride which will take you to the top of Castle Hill. The Ljubljana Castle offers spectacular views over the city and the surrounding countryside. Back in the Old Town, you will continue across the Dragon Bridge - an Art Nouveau masterpiece adorned with dragons and the symbol of Ljubljana, and stroll alongside the Ljubljanica River to the centrally located and bustling Preseren Square. If you wish, you can also enjoy some time on your own.

Then you will continue towards the village of **Lipica** and its famous Stud Farm - the cradle of the Lipizzaner horse. The stud farm was founded in 1580 and this year it is celebrating its 430 anniversary. For over four centuries, the Lipica Stud Farm has nurtured the tradition of breeding and selecting thoroughbred horses. You will be able to enjoy the intact nature, **riding lessons on the back of amazing Lipizzaners**, ride through the Lipica park in an elegant horse-drawn carriage.

Afterwards, you will continue with your driver towards **Rovinj**.

Upon arrival, you will check in to your hotel and enjoy the evening at your leisure. Monte Mulini Hotel is one of the most luxury properties in Croatia, a boutique hotel situated in a charming bay, not far from the center of Rovinj.



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DAY 5: tour of ISTRIA region



This morning your guide and driver will meet you in the hotel to begin your exploration of the Istrian Peninsula. This region has always attracted a special kind of visitors: those who consider gastronomy as one of the most important reasons for traveling. The alluring character of this region lies not only in its beautiful coast but also in the inland, described as the terra incognita – an unknown, unexplored land. This magnificent region thus combines two different climates and forms a unique gastronomic entity consisted of the exquisite Mediterranean seafood of the coast and the products of the inland’s gardens, orchards and vineyards. As a whole, the gastronomy of Istria represents a complete harmony of flavors and it is yours to discover...

As you drive through the rugged and hilly terrain you will come to **Grožnjan** – a small ancient hilltop town in northwestern Istria. Grožnjan takes great pride in its wealth of tradition, cultural heritage and natural beauty, all of which is ennobled by art. Today, numerous cultural and historical landmarks serve as backdrops for cultural manifestations and entertainment in approximately twenty private galleries and studios. You will continue to the picturesque village of **Nardući** where you will enjoy a private wine tasting at the famous Franc Arman winery. Grape-growing and winemaking have long been the economic mainstay of generations of families in Istria. Traditionally passed down from father to son, vineyards were cultivated and worked by hand, often with little or no mechanisation, well into the mid-twentieth century. Established in 1850, Franc Arman Vineyards and Winery, headed today by Franc and Oliver Arman, continues the family tradition and core values set out by founding father Edoardo, while taking the art and science of winemaking to new levels. After the wine tasting, you will head out to the village of Livade, one of the most important centers of truffle farming in Europe. Here you will enjoy a **CALVADOS CLUB Extraordinary Experience: truffle hunting demonstration with a local farmer and his sniffer dog**. Until recently the Istrian white truffle was unknown on the world’s stage of luxury gastronomy. Only those who are the true connoisseurs of this magical fungus come to visit the small corner of the world from which this delicacy originates. We recommend you to try the exceptional cuisine of the famous **Zigante Restaurant** (cost of lunch is not included). It’s owner, Mr. Zigante, has earned



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his place in the Guinness Book of Records as the one who has found the biggest (2.88lbs!) white truffle in the world. The restaurant offer truffles, as well as the other Istrian delicacies such as Pršut (Prosciutto) and local cheeses and meats, complimented by wines from Croatia's vineyards and the native grappa of the region. Not far from Livade, you may wish to visit the medieval ruins of the town of **Motovun**, an excellent example of the ancient townships that dotted the Istrian peninsula.

You will complete your tour in the charming town of **Rovinj**. The Old Town of Rovinj rises up on a peninsula and is a witness to times gone by and the valuable accomplishments of its past artisans. Experience the sights of this magical town while strolling with your guide down narrow streets to the magnificent church of St. Euphemia, the town's most important monument. This baroque building made in Venetian style was dedicated to the saint and martyr whose sarcophagus was miraculously washed ashore somewhere around 800. The town of Rovinj was declared a cultural monument in 1963.

DAY 6: ROVINJ - BALE - BRIJUNI - PULA

Meet your guide and driver in the hotel lobby for a private full day tour of Istria's finest sights and towns. First you will visit **Bale (Valle)** – a hidden pearl of Istria inland. A town of exquisite beauty, it was rather forgotten in the past and thus it avoided the abrupt tourist development that destroyed so many cities. A magical town is all made in stone and once allegedly attracted the great lover Casanova in the 18th century. The agricultural land around the town of Balle, called "stancije", is known for the good quality olive oil and wine. This area is also known as the butterfly county –with over 390 butterfly species, many of them are protected and endangered species.

Then you will continue towards the small town of Fažana where you will embark a small public boat to the national park of **Brijuni islands**- known as the pieces of heaven. A stunning archipelago of green islands sinks into the turquoise-blue sea in front of your eyes and shows a unique harmony of intact nature and cultural heritage. Brijuni were also known as the exclusive beach resort for the aristocrats and



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the personal summer residence of the Yugoslav president Tito. You will enjoy a private safari tour of the island with a private golf cart and visit some of the numerous archaeological and historical sites with your guide.

Back on the mainland, you will continue towards the town of **Pula**, where your guide will take you for a private walking tour of this beautiful, 3000 year old Roman town. Pula is the largest town on the Istrian peninsula and

offers a diversity of attractions to lovers of culture. The rich itinerary, where every step you take through the old town is a landmark, begins and ends with the Roman amphitheatre, popularly called the Arena of Pula. Built in the 1st century AD, at the same time as the magnificent Colosseum in Rome, it was once the site of gladiator fights. In the Middle Ages it was the site of knights tournaments and fairs and today it is the venue for summer performances. While strolling through Pula you will come across numerous monuments of Roman architecture: the Triumphal Arch of the Sergi from the 1st century B.C., Hercules' Gate and Twin Gates, the Temple of Augustus, Arena and Small Roman Theatre in the town centre. In the afternoon, your guide and driver will take you back to your hotel. Overnight in Rovinj.

DAY 7: ROVINJ - PLITVICE - ZAGREB

This morning meet your driver in the hotel for a private transfer to ZAGREB. On your way, you will stop to visit the **Plitvice Lakes**, the most beautiful national park in Croatia, protected by the UNESCO as the World Natural Heritage. Upon arrival, you will meet your local guide for a private tour of the park area. Enjoy the unspoiled beauty of a grand collection of waterfalls, gallery of lakes, forests and diversity of animal life. The beauty of the National Park lies in its sixteen lakes, inter-connected by a series of waterfalls, and set in deep woodland populated by deer, bears, wolves, boars and rare bird species. The lakes are renowned for their distinctive colors, ranging from azure to green, grey or blue. Discover the mesmerizing ever-changing landscape - created by water, gravity, limestone and time - in this unique park of nature. Your guide will take you through the park by a well-laid out system of wooden walkways that allow you to experience the best of your visit.

In the afternoon, you will continue with your driver



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towards Zagreb. Upon arrival, you will check in to your centrally located boutique hotel and enjoy the evening at your leisure.

DAY 8: ZAGREB - onward

This morning meet your driver for a private transfer to the airport for and your flight onward.

We wish you a memorable journey...



RECOMMENDED HOTELS	
ZAGREB	The Regent Esplanade Hotel
BLED	Vila Bled Hotel
ROVINJ	Monte Mulini Hotel

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