

Cycling Safaris

Slovenia – Emerald Route Self Guided tour 2018

243 - 270 km | 8 days / 7 nights



Slovenia was formerly part of Yugoslavia (gaining Independence in 1992) and was one of the ten accession countries that joined the EU in May 2004 (indeed the richest and economically well advanced). A relatively small country in terms of size and population (just two million) it has a very varied geography. To the north it is bordered by Austria, to the west by Italy, to the south by Croatia and to the east by Hungary. Culturally, these neighbours have exerted influences over the Slovenian peoples (as it has changed hands between them, from the Roman Empire through to the Austro-Hungarian Empire and also being behind the Iron Curtain). The geography of the country almost seems to reflect these influences too, with the North West predominantly Alpine, the South West Mediterranean and the East low lying plains.

The stunning beauty of the country is certainly a good reason to come and visit, but for many, the friendliness of the Slovenians would be reason enough in itself. Many speak impeccable English (as well as other languages) and are delighted to share their country with foreign visitors.

This classic Slovene bike trekking trip takes you through Slovenia's most famous historical attractions and many natural points of interest.

Cycling tour highlights:

- Trip starts at the famous "Triple Bridge" in Ljubljana
- Visit Postojna or Škocjan caves, see the famous Lipizzaner horses
- Relax with a cappuccino in the spectacular Trieste Piazza Unita
- Stay on a vineyard, sip typical Teran wine

TOUR ITINERARY

Day 1 **ARRIVAL TO LJUBLJANA**

Accommodation in 4* hotel.

Once settled in to your hotel, you will visit the historic old town and marvel at the ornate, old-world architecture and lovely “fin de siecle” mansions. Then it’s a short walk or ride up to the mighty Ljubljana Castle, perched high on a hill and standing guard over the old town and city center. From its tower you get a commanding view of Ljubljana’s heart and soul. As the sun goes down you can choose between relaxing with a drink in the many outdoor bars/cafes beside the Ljubljanica River, or take an evening stroll, enjoying the lights and vibrant sounds of the city and its charismatic people. Or perhaps do both!

Day 2 **LJUBLJANA - VRHNIKA** **39 km / 57 km with a detour**

A nice easy first day across the historic and richly diverse plains surrounding the capital.

As the morning sun begins to rise high in the sky, you will be cycling across an immense 160-square kilometer marshy plain. The Ljubljansko Barje was once a great lake until it dried up 6000 years ago, leaving an incredibly diverse landscape behind, that is now home to some of Europe’s rarest forms of bird, plant and insect life. Along the way you can take a short walk into the picturesque Iški Vintgar gorge nature reserve, carved deep into a stunning limestone dolomite plateau, and visit the remnants of the world’s highest railway viaduct in Borovnica. Just before arriving in Vrhnika, you can visit the Technical Museum of the Republic of Slovenia housed in Bistra Castle, where you’ll find a great hunting collection and an interesting exhibition of Tito’s cars.

Day 3 **VRHNIKA - POSTOJNA** **32 km / 44 km with a detour**

Hilly day, side roads. A slightly more demanding day over gentle hills, forest roads and a typical Carst polje (field). Accommodation in 4* hotel.

On this day the roads will take you away from the main tourist routes and off the beaten track. You will experience the real Slovenian countryside as you cycle past the beautiful Slivnica Mountain and the magical disappearing lake of Planina, and marvel at the wonders of this vast world of limestone. You can stop for a picnic lunch in the Rakov Škocjan nature reserve, where the Rak River has carved out a stunning gorge containing some of nature’s most incredible landscape formations, including two natural bridges.

Day 4 **POSTOJNA - ŠTANJEL/KODRETI** **42 km/ 48 km with a detour**

Hilly, one long descend some hills afterward. Accommodation in 3* guesthouse.

So far nearly 30 million tourists have visited this stunningly beautiful underground Postojna cave formation, carved deep into the heart of the limestone hills. This is the most extensive cave system in Slovenia, covering a total of 21 kilometers. The 1½ hour tour will take you through a fairytale world full of large and colorful stalactites and stalagmites, not forgetting the unique “human fish”, a mysterious creature that lives in dark pools inside the caves. You can also take a short detour to the impenetrable fortress of Predjama castle, wedged tight into a crevasse halfway up a 123-meter cliff-face protruding dramatically into the surrounding basin. Here lived a vivacious and daring knight. Erasmus kept a whole army at bay by utilizing the secret of the Predjama Caves to sneak out for supplies, which included freshly picked cherries which he used to throw at his adversaries to taunt them. Take the tour and learn how Erasmus met his untimely demise in less than poetic circumstances, as he was literally caught with his pants down.

Day 5 **ŠTANJEL - LIPICA - DIVAČA** **48 km**

Rolling terrain with flat sections. Accommodation in 3* hotel.

First stop is at the lovely botanical garden in Sežana, then it's on to the stud farm of Lipica, where you can visit these beautiful thoroughbred Lipizaner horses whose glistening white coats and gentle, graceful dancing have earned them a worldwide reputation. The history of the Lipica horses is closely linked to the Vienna riding school. Take a tour in a traditional carriage, watch them perform and visit them close up in their stables. This will be a day to remember. If you have the time for a couple of side-trips, you can also visit the unusual but very interesting "War Museum" set in the village tower of Lokev.

Day 6 **DIVAČA - MUGGIA** **38 km**

Initially rolling terrain, then a long downhill. Accommodation in 3* hotel.

Postojna Caves, you can visit Karst Škocjan Caves this morning – listed as UNESCO natural monument. You can take a slight diversion into the Italian town of Trieste – once an important port of Slovenia (whilst under the rule of Austrian monarchy) with its worldly flair and wonderful atmosphere. Visit the castle, cathedral, Piazza Unita central square and relax with a cappuccino in one of many old-fashioned cafes. The day trip ends in Muggia – south of Trieste. After days of cycling it is time to enjoy a gelato in old centre of town or relax on one of the beaches.

Day 7 **MUGGIA - PIRAN** **37 km/48 km with a detour**

Easy trip. Accommodation in 3* hotel.

You will cycle on a new cycling path following a former railway line. Enjoy great vistas of Slovene coast and Trieste Bay. A coffee shop in the fashionable resort of Portorož is a must. The trip ends in the gorgeous Venetian little harbour village of Piran.

Day 8 **DEPART FROM PIRAN**

End of trip after breakfast.

On this tour you can visit the main tourist attractions of Slovenia. It is suitable for cyclists with average fitness.

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2018 TOUR PRICE

17 March – 11 May & 22 September – 13 October (low season)

€690.00 per person sharing

€820.00 single occupancy

12 May – 21 September (high season)

€710.00 per person sharing

€840.00 single occupancy

2018 TOUR DATES

Self guided tours may start any day between 17 March and 13 October 2018

WHAT THE TOUR PRICE INCLUDES

- 7 nights accommodation in 3* and 4* hotels and guesthouses with breakfast
- 21 speed touring bike (equipped with lock, pannier bag, spare tube, set of Allen keys and basic puncture repair set). Bike hire starts at 9am on day 2 of the trip and ends at 6pm on day 7.
- Luggage transfers (one piece/20 kg per person, additional bags for €10 per item)
- Information package including detailed route description (one per booking party)
- Personal welcome meeting and bike handover on arrival
- Back up (hotline service) during the trip

Optional Extras:

- Helmet rental €12 / week
- E-bike supplement €110/week
- Extra bike rental €15 /day
- Half board supplement €125
- Bike insurance: bikes are insured against minor breaks and normal wear. They are not insured against theft or frame break.
- Additional accommodation in Ljubljana - 3 star accommodation
 - €60 per person sharing
 - €90 per single
 - +€20 half board

Additional accommodation in Ljubljana - 4 star accommodation

- €85 per person sharing
- €130 per single
- + €25 half board
- Additional accommodation in Piran - 3 star accommodation
 - €70 per person sharing
 - €100 single room occupancy
 - + €20 half board

Discounts

Discounts for children are available. Please contact us for more information (info@cyclingsafaris.com)

Children discounts are valid if they share room with parents. If children need separate room, discounts are available at request. Date of birth required with booking.

WHAT TO BRING

- We would recommend that you bring padded cycling shorts or even a gel saddle cover to make your days cycling more comfortable (if you wish to bring your own saddle this is no problem). Cycling gloves are also a good investment.
- Although it is not obligatory to wear a helmet we highly recommend that you wear one. If you own a bicycle helmet please bring it, otherwise helmets can be rented for €12 each.
- Don't forget sun cream, sunglasses and sun hat.
- If you wish to use toe clips we advise you to bring your own pedals with toe clips, as the pedals on our bikes do not accommodate them.
- We do not provide rain gear so be sure to bring your own lightweight waterproofs.

BIKE / FITNESS

This tour is perfect for those who like mountain scenery, but don't want to take too much effort to get it. This is NOT a mountain bike tour. It is suitable for cyclists of average fitness.

Bike rental starts at 9am on day 2 of the tour (on day you leave Ljubljana) and ends on the evening of arrival in Piran at 6pm.



Aluminium frame
Shimano gear system with “rapid-fire” shifters
21 speed
Rack on back, 1 rear pannier,
Repair kit, lock
Helmets are not included.

GENERAL INFORMATION

What is the currency and how much money should I bring?

Slovenia now uses Euro.

By UK/US/Irish standards Slovenia is a cheap destination with a ½ litre of beer costing around €1.50 and a glass of wine €2.00. A Pizza would be about €5 euro and a decent 3-course meal with a couple of drinks €10 - €15 euro.

What is the Language?

The official language is Slovenian. Most Slovenians speak good English and many speak German and Italian as well! Lots of places will have menus in several languages and, if not, the ever-helpful locals are more than happy to explain. The guide is, of course, fluent in English.

What happens if I am delayed on the first night?

If you know in advance that you will be late please contact our office. If you are unexpectedly delayed you should call the meeting point on Saturday evening and leave a message as to what time you expect to arrive.

What is the weather like?

Slovenia is a small country that enjoys a varied climate based around its distinct regions – Alpine, Continental and Mediterranean. It is known for being on the sunny side of the Alps. The summer days can be extremely warm (30 C) and sunny with rainfall occurring late into the afternoon (5.00 pm or thereabouts).

TRAVEL INFORMATION

Slovenia is a relatively small country with a small dispersed population (around 2 million inhabitants). Therefore the entry/exit points are fairly limited and it is often better served by places outside of the country.

The main access point is to fly into Ljubljana (the capital).

The national airline is Adria Airways and it has a number of direct flights to major European cities including London (Gatwick), Manchester and Dublin (depart Dublin Friday Nights/returning Saturdays only). For more information check (www.adria-airways.com).

Easyjet fly daily into Ljubljana from Stansted (www.easyjet.com)

There are also many alternatives connections through other European hubs such as Frankfurt, Paris, Prague and Budapest with most of the major European Flag Carriers.

Ryanair (www.ryanair.com) fly to Trieste on the Italian side of the border where again you can take a train to and from Ljubljana. The airport is actually called Ronchi and is some 30km outside the city, which is actually closer to Gorizia (which is one of the trains stopping points).

All the details for the above train journeys are on the website <http://reiseauskunft.bahn.de/bin/query.exe/en>

We can pre-order taxis for you from various locations on request, so please contact us well in advance of the tour if you would like help.

The approximate cost per transfer each way: (price per person each way)

	2 persons minimum (price per person)
Piran to Ljubljana Airport	€75
Piran to Ljubljana city	€65
Piran to Trieste Downtown	€40
Piran to Trieste Airport	€60
Trieste City to Ljubljana	€50
Trieste Airport Ljubljana	€70
Ljubljana Airport to downtown	€20