Bicycle Tours in Croatia: Explorer: Croatia Blue & Green

OVERVIEW

Cycle on a mixture of paved and gravel surfaces to cross three borders as you travel through Istria, the largest peninsula in the Adriatic Sea. Arrive early in Pula to explore this former Roman outpost that features an incredible Roman Amphitheater. Our tour begins with a transfer to the beautiful fishing port of Rovinj. You'll pedal along the Croatian coast, greeted by the crystal blue water of the Adriatic Sea before cycling the rolling hills of Istria's verdant interior, reminiscent of a Tuscan landscape. Then cycle along Slovenia's stunning Adriatic coastline and explore well-preserved medieval cities along the way. Your cycling journey ends in Trieste, once the most important port of the Austro-Hungarian Empire until it became a part of Italy after WWI.

Learn more about what is included and what to expect on your Explorer tour at the Explorer Tour Style page.

HIGHLIGHTS

Bike through three countries; Mediterranean cuisine; Coastal riding; UNESCO World Heritage Site in Pore?; Parenzana Trail (rail-to-trail network); Medieval hilltop town of Motovun

TOUR FACTS

Tour Style	Explorer: Learn more about our Explorer tours at https://www.experienceplus.com/choosing-the-best-tour/styles/explorer
Includes	8 days, 7 nights accommodation; meals as noted in itinerary; GPS with pre-loaded tracks; support vehicle; 2 bilingual tour leaders.
Countries	Croatia
Begin/End	Pula, Croatia/Trieste, Italy
Arrive/Depart	
Total Distance	312 km (194 miles)
Avg. Daily Distance	52 km (32 miles) per riding day
Tour Level	
Keep in Mind	We work hard to maintain consistency across all of our tours, but some trips have unique differences. Here are some things to keep in mind about this tour. Learn more about what is included and what to expect on your Explorer tour at the Explorer Tour Style page.

Please Note: We may have small itinerary changes to this trip after you download this PDF document. If you have booked this trip and there are major changes, including changes to towns or activities, we'll email you directly. However, you should always be sure to refer to the online itinerary for the most up-to-date trip information including arrival and departure tips before you depart for your trip:
https://dev.experienceplus.com/bike-tours/croatia/explorer-istria

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DATES & PRICES

Dates	Price	Single Supplement*
Aug 31, 2024	USD$3195	USD$450

DAILY RIDE SUMMARY

Day	Distance/Gain	Terrain	Day Level	Notes
1	Test ride			
2	39km / 336m (24mi / 1102ft)	Rolling hills		
3	45km / 558m (28mi / 1830ft)	Hilly		
4	55km / 678m (34mi / 2224ft)	Hilly		
5	45km / 699m (28mi / 2293ft)	Hilly		
6	53km / 544m (33mi / 1784ft)	Hilly		
7	61km / 490m (38mi / 1607ft)	Rolling hills		
8	Last Day			

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ARRIVAL INFO

Meeting time 2 p.m. - on Day 1, meet your fellow cyclists and Tour Leaders at the Day 1 Hotel specified on the itinerary.

As you are planning, remember that the hotels listed in our itineraries are our primary hotels and are - in rare cases - subject to change. Before you make arrangements, check with us if your tour departure is guaranteed. If your tour departure is out further than 6 months, please also check with us as there might be slight changes to the itinerary.

The below information will help you plan your arrival. For more tips or other routes, you might like Rome2Rio. The fare and timing information listed below is approximate.

The closest airport to the tour start is the Pula Airport (PUY).

Taxis and buses will be available to get to Rovinj in about 35-45 minutes. Shuttle schedules are available on the Pula airport's website.

Other arrival options:

- Ferry connections from Venice to Rovinj
- Ferry connections from Venice to Pula: Venezia Lines and Adriatic Lines
- FlixBus connections from Venice to Rovinj

DEPARTURE INFO

Your tour ends on the final day after breakfast.

The closest airport to the tour end is Trieste (TRS).

1. Walk 3 minutes from the hotel (click here for map).
2. Train from Trieste Airport to Trieste Centrale (30 min/EUR 4-5, no pre-booking necessary)

Look up Italian train schedules at Trenitalia.com or Trainline.eu. Questions? See our information on taking trains in Europe here.

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Arrive in Rovinj

DAY 1: Sat, May 20th

Highlights Test ride and welcome dinner

Welcome to Rovinj. The town was once just an island until a Venetian land reclamation project in 1763. Take time to wander the town's maze of narrow cobblestone streets, well-preserved historic buildings, the majestic bell tower of the Euphemia Church, and picturesque squares. Just outside the fortified center, stroll beside Rovinj's beautiful fishing port. We will meet in the afternoon for a bike fitting and test ride before enjoying dinner together in this seaside town.

Meals Dinner
Lodging Villa Lili

Loop ride to Bale

DAY 2: Sun, May 21st

Highlights Bale, the coast

Enjoy our inaugural ride along the Istrian coast and loop back into the interior. We'll pedal through Bale, a charming medieval town you'll want to explore. Take your time as you explore the old town, wander around the narrow, cobbled streets within the fortified city walls. Road Surface: 60 % gravel, 40% paved.

Distance 39 km (24 mi)
Gain 336 m (1102 ft)
Terrain Rolling hills
Level
Meals Breakfast
Lodging Villa Lili

Rovinj to Vrsar

DAY 3: Mon, May 22nd

Highlights Lim Bay, Dvigrad ruins, Vrsar

Today we ride east then west around Lim Bay. Technically a submerged river valley, Lim Bay stretches deep into the Istrian Peninsula. Our route bisects several small towns and hillstop settlements, such as the ruins of Dvigrad. Tonight we'll sleep on the coast in attractive and bustling Vrsar. Road Surface: 42% gravel, 58% paved.

Distance 45 km (28 mi)
Gain 558 m (1830 ft)
Terrain Hilly
Level
Meals Breakfast

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Vrsar to Motovun

DAY 4: Tue, May 23rd

Highlights UNESCO Pore?, Parenzana, Motovun

Ride north along the coast en route to beautiful Pore?. Take time to explore the old town, including its 6th century Euphrasian Basilica. This UNESCO World Heritage Site features gem-studded mosaics. In the afternoon we will weave our way along part of the Parenzana trail on our way to the medieval hilltop town of Motovun, the region's trffle capital. Once a narrow gauge railway connecting Trieste with Porec, the Parenzana contributed greatly to the economic progress of Istria. Road Surface: 45% gravel, 55% paved.

Distance 55 km (34 mi)
Gain 678 m (2224 ft)
Terrain Hilly
Level
Meals Breakfast
Lodging Villa Borgo

Motovun to Buje

DAY 5: Wed, May 24th

Highlights Cycling through vineyards, olive groves and medieval villages

Today's ride is a perfect sampling of the cultural richness of Istria's interior, featuring rolling hills, medieval villages and olive groves. You might imagine you've been transported to Tuscany, but with far fewer visitors. First you'll cycle to Groznjan, a small renaissance town also known as the "City of Artists," where almost every house entrance has a small gallery or art studio. The next stop is the medieval village of Momjan - famous for its Muscat. Tonight we sleep in a small agriturismo (farm stay) located near the Croatian-Slovenian border. Road Surface: 28% gravel, 72% paved.

Distance 45 km (28 mi)
Gain 699 m (2293 ft)
Terrain Hilly
Level
Meals Breakfast
Lodging La Parenzana

Loop ride to the coast

DAY 6: Thu, May 25th

Highlights Adriatic coast

Today's loop ride takes us back to the Croatian coast, with views overlooking Slovenia and Italy to the west before heading inland to the Istrian Peninsula. This area is famous for its culinary specialties; in coastal areas you'll find a plethora of traditional seafood specialties and as you move inland the focus turns to wine and olive oil. Make sure Teran wine and extra virgin olive oil are on your list of things to try. Road Surface: 32% gravel, 68% paved.

Distance 53 km (33 mi)
Gain 544 m (1784 ft)
Terrain Hilly
Level
Meals Breakfast
Lodging La Parenzana

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Buje to Trieste

DAY 7: Fri, May 26th

Highlights Cycle through three countries, coastal bike path

Begin the morning warming up your legs in Croatia, then make your first border crossing of the day into Slovenia. We'll follow a cycling path along a stunning section of the coast to Se?ovlje Saltpans Natural Park, the largest wetland on the coast and famous for its salt production. We continue on the bike path through the beautiful seaside towns of Piran, Izola, and Koper and we'll then cross into our third country of the day, Italy to Trieste! This port-town, sits on the coast of the enchanting Adriatic Sea and is a tiny slice of Italy almost entirely surrounded by Slovenia. Road Surface: 16% gravel, 83% paved.

Distance 61 km (38 mi)
Gain 490 m (1607 ft)
Terrain Rolling hills
Level
Meals Breakfast, Dinner
Lodging Hotel NH Trieste

Trieste - tour end

DAY 8: Sat, May 27th

Highlights Trieste

Our tour comes to a close today after breakfast at the hotel. If time allows, spend the day getting to know this capital city of the Friuli Venezia Giulia region, or continue on to your next destination.

Meals Breakfast

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WHAT'S INCLUDED

When you book a tour with ExperiencePlus! our goal is to ensure your only focus each day is to hop on your bike and explore scenic cycling routes in new destinations. Inclusions may differ depending on which tour style you pick but all ExperiencePlus! tours include the three most important aspects of a guided bike tour.

- Superb tour leaders who are fun and multilingual, bi-cultural experts, and cycling enthusiasts. They will support you and help you navigate confidently on and off the road.
- High quality bikes selected for the terrain you are cycling on and correct bike fitting to ensure comfortable cycling.
- Thoughtfully designed itineraries and routes that take advantage of stunning cycling destinations and the freedom of bicycle travel.

PRE-TRIP SUPPORT

- Bicycle training programs designed specifically for your tour and fitness level.
- Planning tips on what to pack, hotel recommendations and other helpful details from our Travel Planning Pages: https://ep-2023.localhost/travel-planning/
- A gift of your choice (cycling jerseys, socks, or a t-shirt) as our way of saying thanks for choosing ExperiencePlus!
- *Traveler services including assistance booking extra nights at the tour starting and ending hotels. (*Explorer Tours excluded)
- See "What's Included" for tour-specific inclusions and be sure to check the "Keep in mind" section under "Tour Summary" online.

BICYCLES

For a full list of what's included with your bike see: https://ep-2023.localhost/what-to-expect/our-bikes/. If you would like to bring your own pedals and shoes we recommend doing so. On Explorer tours we include a GPS device on all bikes. We ask that you bring your own helmet to ensure the best fit. If you would like us to provide you with a used helmet, please contact us.

NAVIGATING, DAYSHEETS AND VAN SUPPORT:

Each day you'll receive a daily briefing with a highlighted route map. About 14 days prior to your tour, we will provide you with access to RideWithGPS Experiences, our platform to distribute information on each tour day's activities, meals and ride, as well as GPS-routes.

Daily information also includes Tour Leader phone numbers, hotel information and interesting historical and cultural information. On Classic, Bike and Boat and Expedition tours we also navigate using our signature chalk dust arrows. Our arrows make navigating very easy—you may never need to look at the map. On Explorer tours the terrain and destinations are not always conducive to using chalk arrows so we'll ride as a group or you can navigate on your own with the GPS tracks. On tour you will have a support van providing water and snack resupply, mechanical assistance, a lift for tired cyclists, and luggage transfers. On some itineraries the van will not be able to follow sections of the route that stray from the road for example onto cycling paths.

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Need More Miles? On many days it is possible to add miles to the day, just talk to your tour leader about your options.

Need Fewer Miles? If you aren't sure about your abilities or how much you want to ride remember the support van is available to offer snacks, encouragement, a lift over the next hill, or to the next hotel. You are on vacation and we're here to help make it perfect for you.

TIPPING YOUR TOUR LEADER TEAM:

If you feel your tour leader team has demonstrated great expertise and service, common practice within the travel industry is to tip. Tipping is voluntary and greatly appreciated, and gratuity amounts vary widely. Should you decide to leave a tip, as a guideline, we suggest 5% of the tour cost per traveler — this is for the entire tour leader team, not each tour leader. You can give the tip to any member of the tour leader team, as they share it evenly. In order to avoid social tensions, we encourage you to tip as individuals and not as a group. If you feel your tour leaders did not quite meet your expectations, please let us know. *Tips are included in Expedition pricing.

PHOTOS:

By reserving space on tour, you agree that ExperiencePlus! may use, re-use and reproduce any images, photos or videos sent to us, or that are taken by our guides or other travelers, in any medium, including but not limited to print, electronic media, or Internet, free of charge and without your right to inspection. If you do not want us to use any images of you, you must inform us or your tour leader in writing at the start of the tour.

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OUR TOUR STYLES

We realize that one size does not fit all and there are as many ways to travel by bike as there are different types of cyclists and travelers. No matter what you are looking for in a cycling vacation, we have a tour with just the right pace for you.

Classic Tours: Dream of traveling through a region by bike? then our Classic style bike tours are for you! Our unique chalk arrows lead the way as you explore small villages and world-class cities while traveling at your own pace.

- Tour Length: 7-15 days
- Hotels: 3-4 stars, most itineraries include at least one two-night stay at the same hotel.
- Road Type: Pavement, bike paths.
- Multi-night Stays: Occasionally
- Navigation: Chalk Arrows
- Price: $$$
- Tour Levels: 1-4.5

Explorer Tours: Travel further off the beaten path - we let the destination dictate where we ride, not the road surface.

- Tour Length: 7-8 days
- Hotels: 2-3 stars, occasional multi-night stays at the same hotel.
- Road Type: 30-50% gravel or hard-packed dirt, the rest pavement.
- Multi-night Stays: Occasionally
- Navigation: Group riding and GPS
- Price: $$
- Tour Levels: 1-4

Bike and Boat Tours: Spend days cycling and your evenings relaxing on a private boat as you cruise to your next port.

- Tour Length: 7-8 days, some itineraries have land-based extensions available.
- Barge/Boat: 3-4 star, same cabin for the entire boat trip.
- Road Type: Pavement
- Navigation: Chalk Arrows
- Price: $$$
- Tour Levels: 1-4

Expedition Tours: Multi-week tours where you spend long days on the bike with the added satisfaction of pedaling across multiple countries.

- Tour Length: 15-40 days
- Hotels: 2-4 stars, typically there is a 2-night hotel stay every 5-7 days.
- Road Type: Pavement with occasional hard-packed dirt or gravel.
- Multi-night Stays: On rest days
- Navigation: Chalk Arrows
- Price: $$$
- Tour Levels: 4-5

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Bike Tour Levels

We know that travelers have different cycling abilities and preferences for the number of miles, elevation gain, and type of terrain they want on a bicycle tour. We have rated each day of our tours on a scale of 1-5. Our Tour Level's are an average of the day rating on tour. We recommend looking at the daily summary on the PDF and Website Itinerary to see details about each day's ride.

LEVEL 1 - 1.5

Level 1 - 1.5 days will be mostly flat and the distance will rarely exceed 50 km. Level 1 - 1.5 tours are suitable for beginner cyclists, those traveling by bicycle for the first time, or multi-generational groups with a desire for a nice and easy bike tour with plenty of opportunities to stop and enjoy the scenery.

- **Average daily mileage:** 20 - 50 km. (12-30 miles) Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 0-400 M (0-1200 ft)
- **Terrain:** Mostly flat with occasional gentle climbs at a grade of less than 3%, that are sustained for a maximum of 3km. There might be a steeper but short climb.

LEVEL 2 - 2.5

Level 2 - 2.5 days are ideal for riders newer to bicycle touring looking for a bit of a challenge.

- **Average daily mileage:** 30-60 km (18 - 38 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 400 - 600 m (1200 - 2000 ft)
- **Terrain:** Mostly rolling terrain around 3%. Presents multiple 3% to 4% climbs. May present an occasional steeper climb.

LEVEL 3 - 3.5

Level 3 - 3.5 days are great for active individuals (who run, bike, swim etc. on a regular basis).

- **Average daily mileage:** 50-70km (30-45 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 600 - 900m (2000 - 2800 ft)
- **Terrain:** Multiple Climbs with grades of 4 - 6%.

LEVEL 4 - 4.5

Level 4 - 4.5 days are the best riding days for avid cyclists or very active individuals who are excited to challenge themselves on a bike.

- **Average daily mileage:** 70-90km (45-55 miles) Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 900-1000m (2800-3600 ft)
- **Terrain:** Presents multiple steep climbs (6% to 8% grades), 1 to 3km long. Alternatively, 4 — 6% grades for 6 kilometers or more.

LEVEL 5 (EXPEDITION)

Our Expedition tours designed for strong riders looking for the challenge of riding across countries or continents. Long daily mileages mean limited van support so we recommend these tours for riders who feel confident that they can ride every mile.

- **Average daily mileage:** 120 km (75 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 500-2000 m (1600- 6500 ft)
- **Terrain:** Expect and be prepared for any and everything.

REMEMBER

A tour level is the average of the days so we recommend you look at the day level on each day of the itinerary to help you better understand what to expect from your tour.

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TO DO ONCE YOU'VE BOOKED!

- ☐ Read through your Reservation Confirmation and After you Book Information (link sent to you by e-mail), it has important information to help you plan your trip!
- ☐ Check the date on your passport. The expiration date should extend three months past your date of return to your home country.
- ☐ Complete the Customer Information Form: https://ep-2023.localhost/travel-planning/customer-information-form/
- ☐ We recommend you take out travel insurance. Find details at https://ep-2023.localhost/travel-planning/travel-insurance/
- ☐ Choose a bicycle training program: https://ep-2023.localhost/travel-planning/bicycle-tour-training/
- ☐ Peruse our country-specific Travel Planning Pages: https://ep-2023.localhost/travel-planning/

6 TO 3 MONTHS PRIOR TO TOUR START DATE

- ☐ Refer to your Tour Packet/Itinerary to see step-by-step arrival and departure information for your tour, meeting place and time, if a reservation on a complimentary ExperiencePlus! Shuttle (if applicable) is required, along with other important information to help you plan your arrival and departure.
- ☐ Reserve your flights after you know you have a confirmed tour departure. Please check with our office if you do not know if your trip is confirmed.
- ☐ Book your pre and post-tour hotel nights.
- ☐ Begin your chosen training program
- ☐ Final payment is due 90 days (120 days for Bike & Barge/Boat tours) prior to the tour start. Please refer to your Invoice and the Final Payment Reminder e-mail which we send 10 days prior to the due date for detailed instructions.

6 TO 2 WEEKS PRIOR TO TOUR START DATE

- ☐ Start reading one of the books or watching one of the movies from our Reading and Movie Lists: https://ep-2023.localhost/travel-planning/.
- ☐ Plan what you are going to pack and start packing! Refer to the Packing Lists for suggestions, and see luggage limits at https://ep-2023.localhost/travel-planning/packing/.
- ☐ We'll email you your access code to Digital Daysheets, Hotel Itinerary, Participant Roster, names and contact information of your Tour Leaders, emergency phone numbers, and other important departure information about 2 weeks prior to your tour start date. All this will be provided to you via a feature called Experiences via the RideWithGPS App (tracks available but not necessary for navigation on Classic, Expedition and Bike & Boat tours).

DAY OF YOUR FLIGHT

Get as much sleep on the plane as you can. Pack one day of cycling gear in your carry-on just in case. See you soon!

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