NAT HAB
CULTURAL JOURNEYS

Vibrant Traditions & Personal Connections



Croatia & Slovenia: From the Adriatic to the Alps

Explore History, Nature, Traditional Villages & Local Foodways

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Trip Details:

Days
9 Days / Apr–Oct

Price
From $10495

Croatia & Slovenia: From the Adriatic to the Alps

Explore History, Nature, Traditional Villages & Local Foodways

Discover little-known corners of Europe on an intimate journey through two Balkan neighbors. Cultural heritage runs deep, and we meet artisan producers of wine, honey, olive oil, cheese, truffles and salt, sustaining methods over generations. Explore ancient towns steeped in Roman and Venetian influence. Nature here is stunning, too: the Dinaric and Julian Alps rise above rugged coast and glacier-carved lakes, their karst expanse riddled with caves, gorges and crystalline rivers. Croatia's shores, speckled with islands, offer idyllic Mediterranean scenery. On a private boat cruise, admire rocky headlands, turquoise bays and red-roofed villages that cascade to the sea. Inland, wander the fairytale landscape of Plitvice Lakes National Park, with its terraced pools, waterfalls and fern-laden forest. In Slovenia, ride a cable car to the top of Triglav National Park and follow trails through alpine meadows. At every turn, you'll be enchanted by the beauty of place, people and the persistence of tradition.

Trip Highlights

Savor Artisan Food, Wine & Traditional Culture

Enjoy behind-the-scenes interactions and tastings with local farmers as we meet beekeepers, cheesemakers, vintners, truffle hunters and olive oil producers

Sail the Adriatic Sea on a Private Boat Cruise

Soak up the sun and scenery as we cruise off the Istrian Peninsula, stopping to swim in aquamarine waters and look for rare for griffon vultures on the cliffs of Cres Island

Hike in the Uncrowded Dinaric & Julian Alps

Explore a dramatic limestone wonderland spanning two countries, an unspoiled mountain region where wildflowers, waterfalls and butterflies abound



Croatia & Slovenia: From the Adriatic to the Alps Itinerary

Explore History, Nature, Traditional Villages & Local Foodways

Itinerary at a Glance

Day 1	Zadar
Day 2	Plitvice Lakes National Park / Nin / Zadar
Day 3	North Velebit National Park / Opatija
Day 4	Cres Island
Day 5	Hum / Buzet
Day 6	Skofja Loka / Lake Bled
Day 7	Pokljuka Plateau
Day 8	Mostnica Gorge / Triglav National Park
Day 9	Bled / Ljubljana



Ready to Book? Call an Adventure Specialist at 800-543-8917

Day 1

Zadar

Walk through 3,000 years of history in Zadar's Old Town

- Follow the Roman street grid past the forum, ancient walls and medieval churches
- Join your Expedition Leader and fellow travelers for a welcome dinner

Arrive in Zadar, where you are met at the airport and transferred to our hotel in the historic Old Town. Zadar, on Croatia's northern Dalmatian Coast, is one of the most ancient cities on the Adriatic Sea—archaeologists have found traces of a Neolithic settlement here dating to the 9th century BC. Zadar was eventually conquered by the Romans as they advanced to the eastern shore of the Adriatic in the 3rd century BC.

On a walking tour of the Old Town this afternoon, observe how Zadar's streets were laid out on a Roman rectangular grid, with a forum, thermae and water system elements. When the Holy Roman Empire split in the late 3rd century, Zadar became part of the Eastern Roman Empire, known as Byzantium, and remained the capital of Byzantine Dalmatia until the end of World War I. The city's 16th-century Venetian fortifications are part of UNESCO's Venetian Works of Defense World Heritage Site. Highlights include the Roman Forum, ancient city walls and gates, prominent churches and cathedrals, and the Sea Organ, an architectural musical instrument "played" by sea waves. Reconvene this evening for a welcome dinner with our Expedition Leader at our hotel.

Day 2

Plitvice Lakes National Park / Nin / Zadar

Hike among Plitvice's turquoise lakes and waterfalls

- Follow boardwalks across 16 lakes linked by streams, cascades and travertine terraces
- Arrive early to experience Plitvice's lakes and waterfalls before the crowds and midday heat
- Walk the salt pans of Nin, where sea salt has been harvested by hand for 1,500 years

Rise early to travel inland to Plitvice Lakes National Park for an all-day discovery of one of the world's most impressive karst landscapes, designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site for its extraordinary natural features and undisturbed production of travertine. Contained by natural limestone dams, 16 turquoise lakes are linked by crystalline streams, cascading waterfalls and terraced pools—a dynamic environment with a soundscape as enchanting as its visual beauty. On an easy guided hike over boardwalks that lace the park, discover the fascinating features of the karst environment, defined by soluble stone that has formed caves, sinkholes, sinking springs and terraces. The healthy forest habitat that covers three-quarters of the national park supports wildlife, including native trout, birds and butterflies, deer, wild boar—even Eurasian lynx and endangered brown bears live within its bounds, though they are virtually never seen.

On the way back to Zadar, visit the famous Nin Saltworks, where salt has been collected by hand from the pans for 1,500 years. Ecologically produced by the sea, sun and wind, salt from Nin is therapeutic and biodynamic, used for culinary, cosmetic and health purposes. A valued commodity over the centuries, during the Roman Empire it was exchanged ounce for ounce with gold, and soldiers were paid in salt. The Roman term for such compensation was *salarium*, from which the word "salary" originates. After a 500-year hiatus, Nin Saltworks reopened in 1954, producing salt using traditional methods. On a guided walk along the salt pools, learn how natural salt is made and harvested. Return to Zadar late this afternoon.

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Day 3

North Velebit National Park / Opatija

Hike the Via Dinarica through Croatia's rugged Velebit Mountains

- Follow old shepherd trails through karst fields, beech forest and mountain meadows
- Watch for golden eagles above slopes of edelweiss and mountain pine
- Continue to Opatija for an evening walk along the Kvarner Bay promenade

Rise early this morning to travel to the wildest part of Croatia where we hike several miles along the Via Dinarica, threading its way through North Velebit National Park. This 1,200-mile trekking route knits together Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo and Albania, tracing the spine of the Dinaric Alps down the Balkan Peninsula. Combining a network of old shepherd trails, ancient trading paths, strategic war routes and new connections, it weaves through limestone karst fields, meadows, valleys, beech forest and alpine lakes, traversing a slice of wild Europe. Croatia's Dinaric Alps are among the most rugged and extensive of Europe's mountains. More than 1,000 species of flora thrive here, including edelweiss and European mountain pine. Overhead, we may see golden eagles soaring in the blue sky. En route, survey a vista over the Adriatic that includes the islands of Pag, Rab, Goli, Prvic and Krk. Cultural heritage within the park is a highlight, with remnants of centuries-old dwellings, old cattle pens and dry stone walls.

Continue this afternoon to the Opatija Riviera where our boutique hotel overlooks the Adriatic Sea, backdropped by the green slopes of Mount Ucka. Popular in the 19th century with the Austro-Hungarian elite, the Opatija coast remains a stylish vacation destination. This evening, walk the seafront promenade along Kvarner Bay to a traditional restaurant where we enjoy local specialties, including fresh seafood for dinner.

Day 4

Cres Island

Cruise the Adriatic beneath Cres Island's griffon-vulture cliffs

- Travel by private boat past whitewashed villages and rugged island shores
- Look for rare griffon vultures nesting on protected sea cliffs
- Drop anchor to swim in clear turquoise coves

Spending time on the sparkling blue Adriatic is a highlight of any visit to this region, and we discover its legendary beauty on a private boat cruise today. From Opatija, sail south toward Croatia's largest island of Cres, viewing sun-soaked scenes of rugged hills that drop to the turquoise sea, whitewashed villages with red-tiled roofs, stacked like blocks, and impossibly clear coves that beckon us to drop anchor and swim. Cres is home to a large colony of rare griffon vultures that nest on steep cliffs directly above the sea. Protected since 1969 in the world's first reserve for this species, they are among the largest birds on Earth, weighing 15-25 pounds and boasting a wingspan up to 9 feet. Mating pairs produce just one one egg a year, so conserving each bird is crucial. The Cres reserve is also home to other bird species such as the golden eagle, eagle owl, peregrine falcon, keel, raven, shag, blue rock thrush and more. On our return cruise, weave among the scattered islands that dot the bay, reveling in the seagoing culture Croatia is celebrated for.

Day 5

Hum / Buzet

Hunt for truffles with a local guide and his hound

- Search the Motovun Forest for one of Istria's most prized ingredients
- Taste regional wines and olive oil over lunch at a family-run winery
- Explore Hum, a medieval hill town with fewer than 25 residents

Leaving Kvarner Bay, we cross the Istrian Peninsula to reach the medieval hamlet of Hum, reputedly the smallest town in the world, with fewer than 25 residents. Our route follows the Glagolitic Alley, a road between Roc and Hum along which stone monuments erected in the late 20th century represent letters of the medieval Glagolitic alphabet, an archaic Slavic script that survived in Croatia until the late 19th century. Hum's size belies its rich thousand-year-old history, although its town walls and fortifications are a reminder of regular battles fought over the centuries.

This morning, visit with a local truffle hunter who tells us all about this coveted culinary treasure and how trained dogs are used to sniff them out. We'll search the Motovun Forest for truffles with our host and his hound, then head to a family-run winery to sample various Istrian wines and olive oil, followed by lunch. Our drive continues this afternoon through a landscape of green hills and white limestone soil planted in vineyards and olive orchards. Natural springs nurture wildflower meadows and peaceful stands of forest. Following narrow roads through old Istrian villages, we ultimately reach our hotel in the medieval hill town of Buzet, with the characteristic red-tiled roofs of this Mediterranean region.

Day 6

Skofja Loka / Lake Bled

Meet Slovenia's craftmakers and beekeepers before reaching Lake Bled

- Walk the medieval lanes of Skofja Loka and visit a local artisan's studio
- Taste honey, liqueur and gingerbread at a family beekeeping farm
- Arrive at Lake Bled, crowned by its island church dating to 1142

Depart Croatia this morning and cross the border into Slovenia, where our first stop is Skofja Loka, Slovenia's best-preserved medieval town, with a rich heritage of handicrafts. The first records of Skofja Loka date to 1248, when it was a busy market hub. Originally, it was enclosed by stone walls and could only be entered through one of five gated towers. Today, the walls are long gone, but a hilltop castle still overlooks its narrow alleyways and winding streets, surrounded by mountains. We'll take a guided walking tour of the picturesque town center, stopping to meet a local craftsmaker in a small studio, followed by lunch.

This afternoon, visit a family farm to learn about the long practice of apiculture in Slovenia. The country is considered the heart and soul of beekeeping in Europe, and one of the apiaries on the farm is over 90 years old. Our hosts teach us about the life of bees and how honey is produced and extracted. Slovenia is renowned for the quality of its honey, which we will taste in different forms, including pollen (when in season), honey liqueur and homemade gingerbread. Late this afternoon, arrive in Bled, its fairytale setting offering Slovenia's most famous view. In the middle of Lake Bled lies Bled Island, crowned by the Church of the Assumption of Mary, the subject of countless idyllic photographs. The church on the island dates to 1142, but its current facade reflects its Baroque renovation in the 17th century. This evening, enjoy dinner at a local restaurant overlooking the picturesque lake.

Day 7

Pokljuka Plateau

Visit a mountain family at their summer herding hut

- Hike across the forested Pokljuka Plateau past peat bogs and alpine pastures
- Share time with local hosts in the slopeside hamlet of Zajamniki
- Take in views of the jagged Julian Alps above Lake Bohinj

Some sublime subalpine hiking is in store today atop the forested Pokljuka Plateau. This rounded karst mountain in Triglav National Park was carved by the Pokljuka Glacier, leaving many peat bogs that provide habitat for varied plants and animals. The plateau is little traveled but exceptionally scenic, covered in pine, beech and Norway spruce and punctuated by hidden precipices and sinkholes, grassy pastures and scattered villages. Birds are abundant, as well as butterflies.

Midway along our route, we stop for lunch in the tiny slopeside hamlet of Zajamniki—a "planina," or summer mountain pasture area where Slovenian farmers allow their cattle to roam while they reside in wooden huts for the season. In the shadow of the Triglav massif high above Lake Bohinj, we visit a family-owned mountain cottage, enjoying a visit with our hosts and learning about their traditional lifestyle. The alpine cattle-rearing culture of the mountains around Bohinj has been placed on UNESCO's current Tenative List of World Heritage, including local cheesemaking. Once we reach the end point of our hike, we're rewarded with a striking view of the jagged alpine peaks surrounding us. Later this afternoon, return to Lake Bled with time to wander the waterfront and enjoy the photogenic setting.

Day 8

Mostnica Gorge / Triglav National Park

Rise above Lake Bohinj into the Julian Alps

- Hike through Mostnica Gorge beside rapids and waterfalls
- Taste Mohant, a pungent alpine cheese made in the region since the 13th century
- Ride a cable car and chairlift to high trails below Mount Vogel

This morning, take a hike through Mostnica Gorge, a narrow chasm cut by a clear, gushing mountain river that tumbles down the ravine in a series of rapids and waterfalls. Afterward, stop for an artisan cheese tasting in a nearby village famous for its cheese production, which dates to the 13th century. The region's acclaimed cheeses have been made over centuries by mountain farmers who graze their cattle in summer on the lush, grassy slopes above Lake Bohinj. One heralded variety, Mohant—a unique soft cheese with a pungent smell and distinctive taste, created by the alpine herbs the cows graze on—has European Protected Designation of Origin (or PDO) status.

Lake Bohinj is the crown jewel in the Julian Alps, and it's never far from view as we explore Triglav National Park this afternoon. Slovenia' only national park, it takes its name from 9,369-foot Triglav, the highest point in Slovenia. The park is part of the Julian Alps Biosphere Reserve, the first such area of UNESCO protected ecological status in Slovenia. Ride a cable car to the top of the Vogel ski area to access a hiking wonderland, with grand views of the snow-crusted peaks and sparkling lake far below. Ascending the ski slopes on a final chairlift through a dwarf pine forest, we reach a panoramic plateau below the summit of Mount Vogel, where there's time to wander alpine trails or simply enjoy the vista of the from the meadows at the top of the lift. From the top, walk back down to the cable car (or ride the lift if you prefer), then descend to the valley far below. We cap off our Balkan sojourn with a farewell dinner in Bled this evening.

Day 9

Bled / Ljubljana

Depart Slovenia after a journey from the Adriatic to the Alps

- Transfer from Lake Bled to Ljubljana to connect with homeward flights

Our Croatia and Slovenia cultural journey comes to an end this morning as we depart the mountains. Transfer to the airport in Slovenia’s nearby capital of Ljubljana.



Croatia & Slovenia: From the Adriatic to the Alps Accommodations

Explore History, Nature, Traditional Villages & Local Foodways



Hotel Bastion

This Relais & Chateaux boutique hotel is optimally located in Zadar's Old Town, blending vestiges of medieval heritage and architecture with contemporary design.



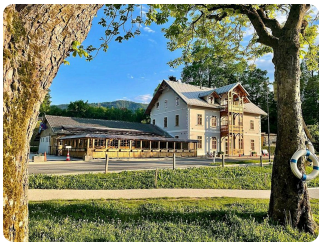
Amadria Park Beach Hotel Royal

This stylish hotel on Croatia’s Opatija Riviera is set directly on the seaside promenade, with a sweeping view of the Adriatic Sea and a private beach for guests.



Hotel Vela Vrata

Tucked away on a narrow cobbled street in Buzet's medieval Old Town overlooking the serene Mirna River Valley, this boutique hotel exudes local Istrian heritage and tradition.



Hotel Starkl

This chalet-style heritage hotel overlooking Lake Bled enjoys a storied history going back more than a century, with current family owners that have given it a complete renovation in 2021 while preserving its vintage character.

For detailed descriptions, visit nathab.com/cultural-journeys/croatia-slovenia-nature-travel/accommodations.

What Makes Cultural Journeys Different?

Croatia & Slovenia: From the Adriatic to the Alps

Croatia is celebrated for its sun-soaked Adriatic coast and seaside towns, while Slovenia is emerging as Europe's next great discovery. Yet some Croatian icons, like Dubrovnik, now overflow with tourist throngs. Nat Hab offers another path—into smaller villages, quiet sanctuaries and wild national parks, where culture and nature thrive side by side.

1

An Itinerary Off the Standard Track

On our singular journey, you'll enjoy unique elements of Croatia and Slovenia that aren't part of typical tours. While we don't skip essential highlights like Plitvice Lakes and Lake Bled, we immerse you in traditional culture and nature far beyond typical tourist routes. From seaside fishing towns and family vineyards to alpine peaks and artisan farms, you'll discover settings and experiences that recall Europe from centuries ago. Along the way, meet local people who still live close to the land, stewarding it for generations to come.

2

Active Exploration for Up-Close Discoveries

For the richest experiences, we get you out of vehicles and away from tourist centers to spend plenty of time exploring on foot. Whether we're wandering cobbled lanes through a coastal village, foraging for truffles in a forest, or hiking a short portion of the Via Dinarica trekking path through Croatia's Dinaric Alps, you'll find scenes and views you can't get from inside a van.

3

Meet Traditional Artisan Producers & Savor Local Food and Wine

Feast on seafood pulled fresh from the Adriatic that morning, sample olive oil from local family orchards, taste artisan-made honey and alpine cheeses as you witness how they are made, and drink wines from revived ancient processes. Hear from small-scale family producers who are keeping centuries-old traditions alive. In Croatia and Slovenia, every meal reflects the region's character, making food a true highlight of your journey.

4

Major Highlights the Nat Hab Way

While we love sharing the less-traveled pockets of Croatia and Slovenia, we also include some popular places you simply won't want to miss. But we do it our way, strategically timing our visits to avoid the worst crowds. For instance, we head into Plitvice Lakes National Park in the quiet morning hours before the bulk of tour groups arrive, offering more chances for solitude among the pools and waterfalls.

5

Travel with Just 10 Guests...and TWO Expedition Leaders

Our small group size lets us explore remote areas and stay in traditional places that large tours and cruise passengers never experience. With fewer people, the journey is more peaceful and intimate. Plus, with two guides for groups of six to ten guests, we can divide into smaller cohorts, tailoring activities and ensuring exceptional personal attention.

6

Outstanding Expedition Leaders

We're known for the quality of our guides, and you'll find that the leadership on this trip is no exception. With a deep knowledge of cultural and natural history in Croatia and Slovenia, your Expedition Leaders enhance your adventure in a way that makes you feel safe, cared for and enlightened. **Read our Expedition Leader bios** and traveler comments regarding the quality of our leaders.

7

Our Quality-Value Guarantee Ensures a Rewarding Experience

With Natural Habitat Adventures, you get our exclusive guarantee, promising that we will meet the lofty expectations set in our promotional materials. To our knowledge, this is the most impressive guarantee made by any adventure travel company. **Read our important promise for yourself!**

8

Feel Good About Your Carbon-Neutral Journey

We care deeply about our planet, as we know you do. When you travel with us, the carbon emissions from your trip are 100% offset—including your round-trip flights from home. Natural Habitat Adventures has been the world's first carbon-neutral travel company since 2007.



Dates & Pricing Summary:

Price
From $10495

Group Size
Limited to 10 Travelers

Croatia & Slovenia: From the Adriatic to the Alps Dates, Pricing & Info

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2027 Departures

Departure – Return	Pricing	Notes
May 21 - May 29, 2027	**$10795**	
May 30 - Jun 7, 2027	**$10795**	
Jun 8 - Jun 16, 2027	**$10795**	
Jun 20 - Jun 28, 2027	**$10795**	Natural Habitat Explorers Pricing Available
Jun 29 - Jul 7, 2027	**$10795**	
Jul 11 - Jul 19, 2027	**$10495**	
Jul 20 - Jul 28, 2027	**$10795**	Natural Habitat Explorers Pricing Available
Aug 1 - Aug 9, 2027	**$10495**	
Aug 10 - Aug 18, 2027	**$10495**	
Aug 22 - Aug 30, 2027	**$10495**	
Aug 31 - Sep 8, 2027	**$10795**	
Sep 12 - Sep 20, 2027	**$10795**	

Departure – Return	Pricing	Notes
Sep 21 - Sep 29, 2027	**$10795**	

2028 Departures

Departure – Return	Pricing	Notes
Prices and dates not confirmed for 2028		
Apr 29 - May 7, 2028	**From $11395**	
May 9 - May 17, 2028	**From $11395**	
May 20 - May 28, 2028	**From $11395**	
May 30 - Jun 7, 2028	**From $11395**	
Jun 10 - Jun 18, 2028	**From $11395**	
Jun 24 - Jul 2, 2028	**From $11395**	
Jul 4 - Jul 12, 2028	**From $11395**	
Jul 14 - Jul 22, 2028	**From $11395**	
Jul 24 - Aug 1, 2028	**From $11395**	
Aug 2 - Aug 10, 2028	**From $11395**	
Aug 13 - Aug 21, 2028	**From $11395**	
Aug 23 - Aug 31, 2028	**From $11395**	
Sep 2 - Sep 10, 2028	**From $11395**	
Sep 12 - Sep 20, 2028	**From $11395**	
Sep 23 - Oct 1, 2028	**From $11395**	
Oct 4 - Oct 12, 2028	**From $11395**	

See https://www.nathab.com/cultural-journeys/croatia-slovenia-nature-travel/dates-fees for the latest pricing details.

Included

Accommodations, services of Nat Hab's professional Expedition Leader(s) and local guides, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on final day, some gratuities, airport/train station transfers on Day 1 and final day, private boat tour to the island of Cres, all activities and entrance fees, all taxes, permits and service fees.

Not Included

Travel to and from the start and end point of your trip, alcoholic beverages, some gratuities, passport and visa fees (if any), optional activities, items of a personal nature (phone calls, laundry, etc.), airline baggage fees, required medical evacuation insurance, optional travel protection insurance.

Mandatory Insurance

Since the areas we travel to are remote and wild (that's why we go there!), we require that all guests have, at minimum, medical evacuation insurance for this program. This is for the safety of all guests. We require that your chosen independent insurance plan includes at least $250,000 in medical evacuation coverage.

To protect your investment and to provide peace of mind while you travel, we also strongly recommend purchasing comprehensive travel insurance. Plans may cover everything from medical treatment to trip cancellations and delays and lost luggage. Please contact our office if you would like more information about the medical evacuation and comprehensive travel insurance policies we offer by calling 800-543-8917.

Getting There & Getting Home

This trip begins in Zadar, Croatia, and ends in Ljubljana, Slovenia. **You must arrive in Zadar by 2:30 pm on Day 1** in order to join a welcome presentation and walking tour of the city at 3:30 pm.

You may depart from Ljubljana at any time on the final day, though we recommend flights before 1 pm for the smoothest experience.

Our Natural Habitat Adventures Travel Desk can best assist with your travel reservations, as our staff is familiar with the specific requirements of this program and can help arrange the most efficient itinerary. Please call us at 800-543-8917. While we offer the best available rates to us on airfare and additional nights accommodations, you may occasionally find special web rates or lower fares online.

NAT HAB
CULTURAL JOURNEYS

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