



# **CROATIA, SLOVANIA, MONTENEGRO & BOSNIA & HEREGOVINA**

**October 11 - October 24, 2024**  
**Led by Local Expert Guide**

Since the early 1990, sweeping changes have taken place in the Balkans. The word itself means, "To break apart," and that is exactly what has happened. The six regions of the former Yugoslavia are autonomous countries, each with a culture of their own. This tour of the Western Balkans combines the fabulous sunshine and warmth of Croatia; the more diverse parts of three cultures coming together in Bosnia and Herzegovina; and the absolute charm of Slovenia with its wines and Alps. The Croatian coastline is one of the most beautiful in the world. Its cities with their architectural treasures offer an old-world European feeling while their exciting nightlife offers a glimpse of the modern. Croatia is indeed unique, not only for its clear, clean crystal blue waters, but also for a thousand years of different cultures. Enjoy the native cuisine and wines as we travel around the country. We will also have opportunities to interact with the Croats, a warm and hospitable people that enjoy life and will make we feel at home in their beautiful country.

**Ihab Zaki**  
Managing Director

**Friday, October 11**

**Arrive in Ljubljana (SLOVANIA)**



Upon arrival in **Ljubljana** (depending on your arrival time), meet and transfer to *Slon Hotel or similar* for check-in. It is located in the heart of the Ljubljana city center and only a few steps away from the old city core, the Ljubljana castle, and all the main city sights. In the afternoon, we may have time for a leisurely guided walking tour of the historical center. Ljubljana is one of those central European cities that make a strong impression due to the eternal charm of its classic architecture, beautiful bridges, friendly locals, and great food and wine! The former Austro-Hungarian Empire strongly influences the architecture of Ljubljana, and its beauty is omnipresent. Some famous sights are the magistrate (town hall), including its Gothic inner courtyard, the Baroque town mansion, the 18<sup>th</sup> century cathedral, the Shoemaker Bridge, and the Jewish quarter. Return to the *Hotel* for the overnight.

**Saturday, October 12**

**Ljubljana**



Begin the day with a drive to the fabulous **Bled Lake**, and tour the imposing **Bled Castle**, perched on a cliff high above the lake for a spectacular view of the mountains. Head out to visit the **little church** on an island via a hand-propelled pletna (boat). Enjoy a traditional lunch of Slovenian specialties in one of the taverns around Bled Lake, then return to the *Hotel* and enjoy a free afternoon at leisure and overnight. **(B)**

**Sunday, October 13**

**Ljubljana - Brtonigla (via Postojna) (CROATIA)**



Begin the day with a drive to the **Istrian peninsula** and the small, picturesque **village of Brtonigla**, stopping en route in **Postojna** to visit one of the largest **caves** in Europe. Tour this fantastic subterranean world by miniature electric train. Continue the drive to **Brtonigla**, and upon arrival, transfer to *San Rocco boutique Hotel or sim-*

*ilar* for check-in. Situated on a hill of a typically Istrian village, surrounded by fields and unspoiled nature, from which the sea can be reached in just a few minutes. Free afternoon at leisure, and in the evening, enjoy a gourmet wine pairing dinner at San Rocco's restaurant highlighting north Istrian cuisine and then return to the *Hotel* for overnight. **(B,D)**

**Monday, October 14**

**Brtonigla (Pula & Rovinj)**



Begin the day with a visit to the historic towns of **Rovinj** and **Pula**. Rovinj old town is a mixture of urban art and architecture, but its surroundings are masterpieces of nature: the islands of Rovinj archipelago, Lim Bay, Punta Corrente Forrest, the Palud Bird Reserve, Saline, and Fantasy Quarry. Be transported back to ancient times as we make our way in the stone labyrinth and through the old town's narrow streets. The main Church of St. Euphemia keeps relics of the saint and is considered one of the most beautiful Baroque achievements in Istria. Stop to take in the wonderful view of the open sea and the numerous islets in the distance. After exploring the historical sights of Rovinj, continue to **Pula**. As the largest town on the Istrian peninsula, it offers a diversity of attractions to lovers of culture. Every step we take through this old town brings its three-thousand-year-old history to the forefront. While strolling through Pula, we will come across numerous monuments of Roman architecture: the **Triumphal Arch** of the **Sergi** from the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, **Hercules' Gate**, the **Twin Gates**, the **Temple of Augustus**, the **arena**, and the small **Roman theatre** in the town center. Enjoy lunch at a small local bistro before returning to the *Hotel* for a free afternoon at leisure and overnight. **(B)**

**Tuesday, October 15**

**Brtonigla - Split (via Plitvice Lakes National Park)**



After breakfast, head south to the sunny shores of Dalmatia and the city of Split. Stop en route at **Plitvice Lakes**

**National Park** for a walking tour with our local guide. According to the legend, the Plitvice lakes were created after a long drought where the "Black Queen" took pity on the people and animals that cried for water. Heavy rain began to fall and continued until it formed the lakes we see today. The Plitvice lakes, known as the "Falling Lakes," have enjoyed the status of a national park since 1949, and since 1979 they have been under the protection of UNESCO World Heritage. Enjoy a traditional lunch at a restaurant near the park and then leave the splendor of Plitvice behind; continue to **Split**, arriving in the late afternoon and transfer to *Marul Hotel or similar* for check-in and overnight. **(B,L)**

**Wednesday, October 16**

**Split**



Meet your expert local guide in the morning for a guided walking tour through **Split's historical center**. Originally the palatial walled summer residence of the Emperor Diocletian, Split became a city after Salona, the Roman capital of Dalmatia just 4 miles north, was sacked in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Fleeing refugees were given asylum inside the 78 inches thick walls of the palace and over the next 1000 years, this safe haven never grew beyond the same walls that exist today! As a result, a remarkable ensemble of Roman, Gothic, Romanesque, Renaissance, and other architectural features still exist. More than 3,000 people reside inside these ancient walls. End the tour at one of Split's premier wine bars, where we will enjoy Dalmatian delicacies along with local wine and cheese. Free rest of the day at leisure and overnight at the *Hotel*. **(B)**

**Thursday, October 17**

**Split**



After breakfast, begin the day with an exciting private cooking class where we will meet with chef Jolanda where we will be taken on a unique feel like a local" experience through fishmarket, green market for fresh and most delicious products. Food is major part of Croatia's culture, a part of where they just eat, drink, and hang out. That's how it is in this corner of the Mediterranean and Jolanda's menus are not just about meals, they are all about lifestyle! She wants people to experience how it is done and how the locals live. Jolanda food selection is special, and you will get the opportunity to hear a story behind one of the plates. Prepare to find out practically everything we need to know about Dalmatian food, eating habits and traditions. Return to *Hotel* in the afternoon and rest of the day free at leisure and overnight at the *Hotel*. **(B,L)**

**Friday, October 18**

**Split - Hvar**



Enjoy breakfast, and then board the ferry for **Hvar Island**. Upon arrival, transfer to *Adriana Hotel or similar* for check-in. The hotel is located in the very heart of Hvar town. Facing the old city center from its prime location on the promenade, the view from the Hotel includes the cathedral, the arsenal, the Venetian piazza, the yacht harbor, and the bay in one sweeping vista. Blessed with 2,724 hours of sunshine every year, the lavender island of Hvar is called 'Croatian Madeira'. The stunning interior is a panorama of lavender fields, peaceful villages, and pine-covered hills. Under Venetian rule, the locals developed fine stone carving skills that resulted in a profusion of beautifully ornamented buildings including a 16<sup>th</sup> century Venetian citadel. Hvar's wide harbor extends its open arms to the sea while a long seaside promenade, dotted with small rocky beaches, stretches from end to end. Enjoy a wine tasting with lunch then return to the *Hotel*, free afternoon at leisure and overnight. **(B)**

**Saturday, October 19**

**Hvar**



After breakfast, meet the local guide in the hotel lobby and begin the day with a private wine-tasting tour on Hvar - the island of wine. Meet local producers and sample exclusive wines and then have a memorable lunch in an old family olive grove with views of the UNESCO protected Stari Grad fields, the oldest continuously cultivated agricultural plain in the world! Return to Hvar town in, free afternoon at leisure to enjoy the city on own and overnight at the *Hotel*. **(B,L)**

**Sunday, October 20**

**Hvar - Ston - Dubrovnik**



Enjoy breakfast, then head to Dubrovnik via the Drvenik ferry port. Stop en route in the sleepy town of **Ston**, famous for its magnificent city wall fortification complex dating back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century and its long tradition of harvesting oysters. The local host will meet us in a small bay just a few miles from Ston town center and show us how his family has been harvesting fresh oysters for generations before taking us by motorboat for a fresh oyster tasting and light seafood lunch (mussels) served on a private island in the middle of Mali Ston Bay. Continue to **Dubrovnik** and transfer to *Royal Neptun Hotel or similar* for check-in and overnight. **(B,L)**

**Monday, October 21**

**Dubrovnik**



Dubrovnik has captivated kings and commoners alike for centuries! With its signature red and orange clay rooftops

and massive stone ramparts framed by the dazzling blue Adriatic, it's the quintessential walled city of legend-proud, grand, and ancient. In the afternoon, join a local guide for a walking tour of the old town. This sophisticated European city is a masterpiece of medieval architecture and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. A magnificent curtain of walls surrounds marble streets and Baroque buildings that exude a pearly light in the Adriatic sun. The main pedestrian zone (Plaka) is a melange of cafés and shops with outstanding monuments such as churches, monasteries, and museums reflecting a vibrant artistic tradition. One of the absolute highlights of the walking tour is the famous **Pharmacy** at the **Franciscan Monastery** (1317), where there is a fascinating collection of decorated jars filled with ancient remedies, unique measuring devices, alembics, and mortars. The Monastery, which houses a **museum** with outstanding displays of artifacts, was almost destroyed in the tragic earthquake of 1667 and severely damaged in the Homeland War in 1991. After exploring the rich cultural heritage of Dubrovnik, enjoy a sumptuous lunch in one of the finest restaurants in Dubrovnik and then return to the *Hotel* for a free afternoon at leisure and overnight. **(B,L)**

**Tuesday, October 22**

**Dubrovnik - Kotor (MONTENEGRO)**



Enjoy a morning coastal drive down to **Kotor** and the amazing **Boka Bay** to experience Montenegro, a secret gem in the very south on the Adriatic coast. Nestled against a backdrop of ancient walls and fortifications is Kotor, a Venetian city of traders and famous sailors with many stories to tell.

The old city is a well-preserved walled structure, typical of the Middle Ages, built between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. This wonderful medieval architecture and the city's cultural heritage have made Kotor a UNESCO-protected World Heritage Site. Explore Kotor's 12<sup>th</sup> century cathedral, the city's symbol, and an excellent Maritime Museum with a local guide. Take a boat ride to the tiny **Church of Our Lady of the Rocks** and enjoy a delicious lunch in Kotor (on your own) before returning to Dubrovnik and back to the *Hotel* for our overnight. **(B)**

**Wednesday, October 23**

**Dubrovnik - Mostar - Sarajevo**

**(Bosnia & Herzegovina)**



After breakfast, begin the day with a drive to Sarajevo with a stop in **Mostar**. Travel deep into the heart of the Balkans and make our way to the picturesque town of Mostar in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The slim, elegant Stari

Most (Old Bridge), which arches over the swirling Neretva River, provides this ancient town with its icon and name: Mostar meaning 'keeper of the bridge.' Flanking the bridge is the old, cobbled Ottoman Quarter, a haven for the city's artists and artisans, along with the 16th century mosques, old Turkish houses, and endless cafés. After a short walk-through Mostar's historic center. Continue to **Sarajevo**, a sprawling city of several million and one of those rare ancient places that never lost itself in the modern world. Tomorrow we will learn how the mix of exotic Sarajevo sights, sounds, images, and tastes are unparalleled worldwide. Transfer to *President Hotel* or similar for check-in and overnight. **(B)**

**Thursday, October 24**

**Sarajevo**



What makes Sarajevo so compelling is its rich pastiche of cultures and religions. Jews, Christians, and Muslims keep their ancient traditions alive while still cherishing their common Turkish roots, and when it comes to cuisine, even Istanbul's own Orhan Pamuk (Nobel Prize winner for literature in 2006) considers Sarajevo to have the best Turkish food in the world! visit **Sarajevo's historic old town** district, including the **Old Town Hall**, the **City Museum**, and **Kazandziluk Street**, where traditional copersmiths have worked for ages. After the tour, enjoy a typical Bosnian lunch (on own), a free afternoon at leisure and overnight at the *Hotel*. **(B)**

**Friday, October 25**

**Sarajevo - USA**



After breakfast transfer to Dubrovnik airport for your flight back to the US. **(B)**

*"We reserve the right to change the order of activities/visits or sites due to unexpected events such as flight cancellations or changes of schedule, or any other reasons beyond our control. We will do our best to ensure that any necessary changes when/if needed to meet the needs of our clients".*



**Tour Cost (Land Only): \$7,995.00**

*Per person sharing in double occupancy*

**Single Supplement: \$2,195.00**

*Price based on group size minimum of 6 participants and maximum of 8 participants*

**Trip Grade: III Lodging Level: \*\*\*-\*\*\*\***



**Tour Includes:**

- Airport/Hotel/airport transfers.
- Accommodation at mentioned Hotels or similar.
- Meals as mentioned in the itinerary (B: Breakfast, L: Lunch and D: Dinner).
- Transportation with a modern A/C motor coach.
- Service of English-speaking guides.
- Entrance fees to all mentioned sites and museums.
- Bottled water on the bus during touring days.
- Gratuities to guide, drivers, and porters (provided minimum number of travelers is reached).

**Tour does not include:**

- International Airfare USA-Slovenia / Dubrovnik-USA.
- Visa (currently gratis to US citizens).
- Beverages and alcoholic drinks with or without meals.
- Any required pre arrival & pre departure PCR tests.
- Items of a personal nature (camera fees, laundry, emails, excess luggage, etc.).
- Transfers if not arriving/departing on scheduled tour dates.
- Dayroom/overnights necessitated by changes in airline schedules or early arrival.
- Trip surcharge to operate below required minimum participants.
- Travel protection insurance (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)

**Trip Grade**

**II Active** – Some hikes, slightly more demanding walks at or to sites, a few elevations, comfortable but busy schedule and some long rides.

**Lodging Level:**

**\*\*\*-\*\*\*\* Superior - Luxury:** Combination of lodges and hotels with additional amenities, refined service, and comfort level acceptable to western standards (4 stars) .

