

EXCURSIONS DESCRIPTION / 2017 / Istria

FLAVOURS OF ISTRIA (from Poreč, Umag and Novigrad)

Travel back in time to the days when togas were all the rage. Pula is to Croatia what Rome is to Italy. There's no hiding the city's main attraction – an enormous Roman Amphitheatre. Reminiscent of the Colosseum in Rome, just wandering around its mighty Roman walls conjures images of gladiators doing battle in the dust. It's the biggest theatre of its kind in the world. Discover Rovinj, otherwise known as little Venice. All tall townhouses and narrow cobblestone streets, this tiny seaside town looks like a mirror image of its Italian neighbor, only in miniature. You'll check out the amazing 'village in the clouds' – a hilltop town that stands in a candy-floss swirl of white. And tuck into a tasty Istrian lunch. All in all, it's a great day out.

Hotel departure followed by:

09:45 – arrival Rovinj, sightseeing, free time

12:30 – departure Rovinj

12:50 – arrival Gržini, warm welcome with donkey present, lunch

14:15 – departure Gržini

15:00 – arrival Pula, sightseeing, free time

17:30 – departure to hotel

FLAVOURS OF ISTRIA (from Rovinj)

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Hotel departure followed by:

10:15 – arrival Pula, sightseeing, free time

12:15 – departure Pula

12:50 – arrival Gržini, warm welcome with donkey present, lunch

14:15 – departure Gržini

15:00 – arrival Poreč, sightseeing, free time

17:30 – departure to hotel

FLAVOURS OF ISTRIA (from Pula and Medulin)

Travel back in time to explore the Istrian peninsula. You will visit one of the most delightful hilltop villages in Istria, Bale, with its stoned streets wind in a circle around the hill. Discover Rovinj, otherwise known as little Venice. All tall townhouses and narrow cobblestone streets, this tiny seaside town looks like a mirror image of its Italian neighbor, only in miniature. Discover Poreč and his old town built on a small peninsula, which history began more than 2000 years ago, the old city is a cultural monument itself. Walk the old streets Decumanus and Cardo Maximus, by the remains of Roman temples of Mars and Neptune and more important monument the Euphrasian basilika, one of the most beautiful preserved monuments of Early Byzantine art in the Mediterranean. And tuck into a tasty Istrian lunch. All in all, it's a great day out.

Hotel departure followed by:

10:15 – arrival Bale, sightseeing

11:00 – departure Bale

11:20 – arrival to Rovinj, sightseeing, free time

13:45 – departure Rovinj

14:30 – arrival to Gržini, warm welcome with donkey present, lunch

15:30 – departure Gržini

16:15 – arrival Poreč, sightseeing, spare time

18:00 – departure to hotel

BACK TO NATURE: PLITVICE LAKES (from Rovinj, Poreč, Novigrad, Umag)

The striking Plitvice Lakes inscribed on the UNESCO's World Heritage list are Croatia's miracle of Nature. Connected by waterfalls, circled by forest and criss-crossed with wooden-bridges, the Plitvice Lakes are a nature lover's dream. Check out the 250-foot waterfall at the lower lakes. Wander along the boardwalks and bridges. And take a boat trip across Lake Kozjak, the biggest stretch of water here.

Hotel departed followed by:

08:45 – arrival Etradex gas station

09:00 – departure Etradex

10:00 – arrival Dramalj

11:00 – break

11:30 – departure Dramalj

13:00 – arrival Plitvica Lakes, 30 minute break

13:30 – 16:30 – sightseeing the Plitvica Lakes

17:00 – 18:30 – lunch at Mirjana Restaurant in Rastoke

18:30 – driving towards Bosiljevo, drive via motorway

20:30 – arrival at "Vrata Jadrana", break

22:30 – arrival to destination

TIME TRAVEL: VENICE (from Pula, Rovinj, Poreč, Novigrad, Umag)

One of the greatest cities in the world built on 118 islands. Venice itself is a living museum with indelible traces of its history, canals and bridges (Rialto Bridge and The Bridge of Sighs), St. Mark's Square and the stunning basilica from the 8th century. As you walk along many streets that were once crowded with artists, you will be able to see the beautiful masterpieces of Venetian architects. We will take you to see the making of the unique and beautiful Murano glass, a symbol of Venice. Later on in the day, you will have free time to find a secret or two hidden by this eternal city.

Hotel departure followed by:

08:00 – boat departure from Poreč & Pula ports, 7:00 – boat departure from Rovinj

10:15 – arrival Venice, passenger disembarkation and following guide to St. Marco's Square, spare time for individual sightseeing and shopping (arrival from Pula is at 11:15)

16:30 – check-in in front of boat

17:00 – boat departure from Venice (departure for Pula is at 17:15)

19:45 – arrival at Port Poreč, 20:45 arrival to Rovinj port, 20:30 arrival to Pula port

Transfer to hotel

DISCOVER CROATIA: NATIONAL PARK BRIJUNI (from Rovinj, Poreč, Novigrad, Umag)

Enjoy a relaxing start to the day with a short boat journey to the largest of the Brijuni Islands, rich in stunning natural beauty and History, from the days of the Romans to more recent times when the late president Tito used to hold meetings with his heads of Government there. Take pleasure in the "small train" ride through peaceful pathways where exotic wildlife roams free. All in all a relaxing day in magnificent surroundings.

Hotel departure followed by:

09:00 – boat departure from Port Poreč

11:00 – arrival at Veli Brijun, disembarking and welcome by local guide, sightseeing

13:00 – departure from Brijuni

15:00 – arrival at Port Poreč

Transfer to hotel

ISTRIAN HILLTOPS JEWELS (from Pula, Rovinj, Poreč, Novigrad, Umag)

Discover the beauty of “Green Istria”, hidden from everyday bustle in its lowlands encompassed by forests and hills”. Legend has it that, not so long ago in the valley of river Mirna, lived giants who were so tall they could pass on tools from hand to hand and large stones to build numerous settlements on hills! Grožnjan, known as the city of artists, surrounded by green hills and a magical white soil with interesting history, which has been written in every nook and naturally permeates the present, it is rich in ancient churches, prehistoric finds, ancient castles, magnificent palaces and many other old buildings, whose past glory was recovered through restoration, all in order to be able to evoke the charm of the past. In this small town, there are as many as 28 ateliers; there is also the city art gallery with works by artists from around the world, and even the well-known Imaginary Film Academy found its home here. In the summer, all of Grožnjan becomes a stage on which renowned jazz and classical musicians alternate, as do many other artists who have discovered the true joy of creation here. After Grožnjan we shall visit the small town of Oprtalj situated on a hill and accessible by a narrow plateau, however, a very picturesque village in northern Istria! At some time in the past, this was a fortified settlement and now only the settlement gateway is visible. Every stone one steps on emanates its historical spirit, each perfectly set in place to create a perfect picture which, in its silence, enriches visitors of tales from the past. Our stroll ends in a beautiful ambience of a local tavern where we shall have the pleasure of tasting indigenous Istrian delicacies!

Hotel departure followed by:

- 11:00 – arrival Grožnjan, sightseeing
- 13:00 – departure to Oprtalj
- 13:30 – arrival Oprtalj, sightseeing
- 14:00 – food and wine tasting
- 15:30 – departure Oprtalj

CHILL-OUT TIME: FISH PICNIC (from Poreč, Novigrad and Umag)

This BBQ-come-boat trip is a great way to see Croatia’s craggy coastline. You’ll drift by rugged cliffs, sandy coves, and of course, plenty of crystal-clear water. You’ll drop anchor in a beautiful bay where you can take the plunge with a swim or snorkel or just stay on deck to soak up the sun. Finally, you’ll stop for lunch in Rovinj, otherwise known as little Venice. All tall townhouses and narrow cobblestone streets, this tiny seaside town looks like a mirror image of its Italian neighbour, only in miniature.

- 10:00 – departure Port Poreč
- 11:30 – arrival Rovinj, free time
- 13:00 – lunch on board
- 13:20 – departure Rovinj towards the Lim Bay and Vrsar
- 14:30 – arrival Vrsar, break
- 16:00 – departure Vrsar
- 17:00 – arrival Poreč

ALPINE PEARL LAKE BLEED (from Pula, Rovinj, Poreč, Novigrad, Umag)

Slovenia’s Lake Bled is truly stunning. Set in a pine forest with a mountain scenery backdrop, Lake Bled is can't-believe-your-eyes-pretty and it rightfully deserves its name as “the Pearl of Alps”. All snow-capped mountains and glass-like waters, its home to Slovenia's only island - and there's more than a touch of the Austrian Alps about it. In fact at first glance you'll think you've stepped into a scene from the Sound of Music. Think enchanted forests, toy town houses and a fairytale church. To get the best view, you'll visit Bled castle - you can see right across the lake from here. But spare some attention for the chateau itself. With its cone-shaped turrets, yard-thick walls and lofty parapets it's something special. Back on the shore, you pile into a rowing boat to glide over to the tiny island church. Legend has it if you make a wish as you ring the church bell, your wish just might come true.

Hotel departure followed by:

- 10:30 – arrival Ravbarkomana, break
- 11:00 – departure Ravbarkomanda
- 12:00 – arrival Bled, commencing to Castle overlooking the Lake, Castle tour (45 min), returning to city centre, spare time about 90-120 minutes
- 15:00 – departure to Pletna, boarding, ride about 10 minutes to the island, sightseeing
- 16:00 – departure to hotel

19:30 – arrival Poreč
20:30 – arrival Rovinj

NATURE'S CREATIONS: POSTOJNA & LIPICA (from Pula, Rovinj, Poreč, Novigrad, Umag)

Glide through the colorful Postojna Caves by electric train and enjoy the scenery of stalactite and stalagmite sculptures as you go. At Lipizza, the home of pure white Lipizzaner horses, enjoy an elegant display by these wonderful animals, trained specifically for Vienna's Spanish school of riding.

Hotel departure followed by:

10:30 – arrival Postojna, break
11:00 – entering the Postojna Cave and sightseeing
12:30 – exiting the Postojna Cave and proceeding to Lipica
13:00 – arrival Lipica, lunch
15:00 – Lipizzaner horse show
15:45 – tour of the stables
16:45 – departure for hotel
18:30 – arrival Poreč
19:30 – arrival Rovinj

ADRIATIC GEMS RIJEKA & OPATIJA (from Pula, Rovinj, Poreč, Novigrad, Umag)

Rijeka is a multicultural heart of Europe that meets all people of good will with its arms wide open. That is the city to be seen when looking down from Trsat Castle! The castle's history dates back to prehistoric times and the Illyrian tribe of Iapydes, followed by the Romans who built their fort there as well, and many other sovereigns who left their unique traces in this magnificent fortification. Take a walk on the colorful city market, meet the old town full of multicolored shops and small galleries, show yourself on Korzo, the heart of the city with many cafes and shop windows! Opatija is thrilling with its elegance, villas and parks that tell of interesting history whose participants were European emperors and kings themselves. Opatija, the pearl of the Adriatic, well-known for its fragrant botanical gardens, parks and colored villas, each telling its secret story that was always a meeting point of European aristocracy, elegance and style, where it was important to be seen, keeps the same atmosphere to the very day! Sipping coffee on one of the sunny terraces, enjoy the atmosphere of rich history of Opatija!

Hotel departure followed by:

10:00 – arrival Rijeka, sightseeing and spare time
12:45 – departure for Opatija
13:00 – arrival Opatija, sightseeing and spare time
15:00 – departure to hotel

WINE TRAIL PARENZANA (from Pula, Rovinj, Poreč, Novigrad and Umag)

Board the train and visit the northern part of peninsula Istria where you'll visit three of many famous istrian wineries where you can enjoy the atmosphere of home in which the wine takes a special place. Making wine is istrian way of life that for centuries proudly passes on from generation to generation.

Hotel departure followed by:

15:00 – board train in Momjan
15:15 – arrival to winery Kabola, wine tasting
16:15 – board train and departure
17:00 – arrival to winery Sinković, wine tasting
18:00 – board train and return to the bus
18:20 – departure for hotel

PARENZANA TRAIN ADVENTURE (from Pula, Rovinj, Poreč, Novigrad and Umag)

Take a ride with us to the village in the clouds. As we travel through time following the history and legends of the Mirna River Valley. Our journey begins in the town of Vizinada with a wonderful view over the blue and green colors of Istra. We will follow the tracks through tunnels and over viaducts to the second stop of the day where we can enjoy the delights of local hospitality and tasting of local products. We pick the train up again heading towards Motovun, delighting in the stunning scenery, the rolling green fields and the vineyards of the valley. The chocolate box beauty of Motovun awaits your discovery with its cobbled streets, city walls and rich collage of architecture.

Hotel departure followed by:

09:15 – arrival Vižinada

09:30 – boarding train and departure

10:00 – arrival Rakotule, welcome and programme

10:50 – continuing to Motovun

11:50 – arrival Motovun, bus drive to the city, sightseeing and spare time

14:30 – departure for hotel

LET'S GO TO... AQUAPARK ISTRALANDIA! (from Pula, Rovinj, Poreč, Novigrad, Umag)

For those who want to spend a day to remember, who feel young, who enjoy careless fun, who seek adventure, who like laughing, who are fearless and the ones less so... It is time for adventure in Istralandia Aqua Park! Forget all and join the merry company in the most amusing waters of Istria!

Hotel departure followed by:

13:00 - arrival to Aquapark, free time

18:00 - departure for hotel

CAPITAL CITY - ZAGREB (from Pula, Rovinj, Poreč, Novigrad and Umag)

Nestled on the slopes of Mount Medvednica is the cosmopolitan capital of Croatia. Zagreb has beautiful architecture, which reflects the grandeur of the former Austro-Hungarian empire. Enjoy a tour by coach of the city followed by a guided walking tour of the main sights. These sights include St. Marks Square and church, the Croatian Parliament building and the medieval "Lotrščak Tower". Visit both inside and out of the centrepiece of the capital the fantastic neo-Gothic Cathedral. You will pass through the colourful market as well as some of the Piazzas in the most historical part of Zagreb. Then enjoy time to yourself to explore and browse around the shops and pavement cafes.

Hotel departure followed by:

11:30 - arrival to Zagreb, panoramic bus drive

12:00 - sightseeing and free time

16:00 - departure for hotel

ZIP LINE ADVENTURE (from Poreč, Rovinj, Novigrad)

Adrenaline attraction you will long remember starts on Hotel Lovac Green terrace in Pazin, and is divided in four parts. First two lines are 80 meters long and they are preparing us for main lines that are crossing the canyon. Third line is 220 m long, with an average speed of 50 km/h and the maximum height of 100 m, just above the sinkhole. We land in the yard of the Writer's house. Here is a starting point for our last and longest line (280 m), which gives you enough time to enjoy the unusual view on a grandiose abyss and a medieval castle on its cliffs. We land on the belvedere above the Grandma's house cave, exactly on the spot from where the famous photo was taken, which was used by illustrator Leon Bennet preparing gravure for Jules Verne's novel "Mathias Sandorf".

Hotel departure followed by:

10:00 - arrival to Pazin, education

10:20 - zip lining 50 minutes

11:00 - free time

12:00 - departure to hotel

HORSE RIDING ADVENTURE (from Pula)

In 2001, in the Istrian village Manjadvorci only 18 km away from Pula, appeared the Ranch Barba Tone. Since then, twenty horses carried on their backs hundreds of tourists – riders and non-riders. The vast majority of tourists is returning - discover for yourself why.

Hotel departure followed by:

10:00 - arrival to Manjadvorci, education

10:30 - horse riding 1h

11:30 - free time

12:30 - departure to hotel

SKYFOX ADRENALIN PARK (from Rovinj, Poreč, Novigrad and Umag)

You will have the best fun in Adrenalin Park! Challenge yourself and try some new physical activities which will show your muscles and your skills.

Hotel departure followed by:

15:00 - arrival to Adrenalin Park, education and activities

16:30 - free time for extra activities

17:30 - departure to hotel

Excursions from Rabac

TIME TRAVEL: VENICE (from Rabac)

One of the greatest cities in the world built on 118 islands. Venice itself is a living museum with indelible traces of its history, canals and bridges (Rialto Bridge and The Bridge of Sighs), St. Mark's Square and the stunning basilica from the 8th century. As you walk along many streets that were once crowded with artists, you will be able to see the beautiful masterpieces of Venetian architects. We will take you to see the making of the unique and beautiful Murano glass, a symbol of Venice. Later on in the day, you will have free time to find a secret or two hidden by this eternal city.

07:45 – boat departure from Rabac port (guests have to make their own way to the port)

11:45 – arrival Venice, passenger disembarkation and following guide to St. Marco's Square, spare time for individual sightseeing and shopping

17:00 – check-in in front of boat

17:30 – boat departure from Venice

21:30 – arrival to Rabac port (guests have to make their own way back to the hotel)

ISTRA TOUR - full day

Discover the magic of Istria. Travel through time with the guide and visit some of the most beautiful towns of Istrian peninsula.

Our first stop is Poreč - by international standards, Poreč as a site is a specific cultural and historical jewel. Today's town plan dates from the Roman times at about 50 BC. Following the common Roman town model, Poreč has two main intersecting streets *Cardo* and *Decumanus*, even today being the backbone of the old town. Episcopal complex of the Euphrasian Basilica – built in the 6th century, is the most valuable monument in Poreč, which is inscribed on UNESCO World Heritage List (entrance ticket not included). *Marafor* – oldest part of the town with remains of two Roman temples, The House of Two Saints, The Istrian Parliament Building, Leoni and Zuccato Palaces are just some of the monuments of this magnificent town. You will have some free time to explore this town on your own prior to scenic drive to Istria hinterland where lunch is served in a traditional Istrian household.

After lunch, our next stop is one of the most picturesque and most romantic little towns in the world – the town of Rovinj. A late medieval town with strong Venetian influence particularly in architecture and everyday life: a place with long fishing tradition, a place which artists, particularly painters, have chosen for life and artistic impressions. . . The old town is a treasury of historic monuments - all tucked among cobbled streets that invite exploration. Known as the "Montmartre of Istria," Rovinj is an artists' colony with many galleries. The Church of St. Euphemia stands proudly at the top of the hill.

Tour includes a walk through famous *Grisia*, street of artists, visit to the town's square, farmers market and *Balbi's* arch and there is some free time.

08:30 –departure from Rabac

09:45 – arrival to Porec, one and half hours sightseeing with guide, one hour free time

12:15 – departure to Krculi
12:45 – arrival to Krculi – lunch
14.00 – departure to Rovinj
14:30 - arrival to Rovinj , one and half hours sightseeing with guide, one hour free time
17:00 - departure to Rabac
18:00 - arrival to Rabac

OPATIJA - half day

Opatija is thrilling with its elegance, villas and parks that tell of interesting history whose participants were European emperors and kings themselves. Opatija, the pearl of the Adriatic, well-known for its fragrant botanical gardens, parks and colored villas, each telling its secret story that was always a meeting point of European aristocracy, elegance and style, where it was important to be seen, keeps the same atmosphere to the very day! Sipping coffee on one of the sunny terraces, enjoy the atmosphere of rich history of Opatija!

08:45 –departure from Rabac
09:45 – arrival to Opatija
12:45 – departure from Opatija
13:45 - arrival to Rabac

BBQ CRUISE (FISH PICNIC) from Rabac – full day

Sail on the crystal blue sea near the coast and bays! Fish picnic is an excursion by boat to the island of Cres. The picnic is organized on one of the beaches, where you will, after a small drink, enjoy a fish meal with wine and music. There is an accordion player on the boat that entertains the guests with many songs during the trip. Relax, bathe, sun bathe on the boat and on the beach. Visit the second biggest Adriatic island and the town of Cres with its cultural monuments.

Included: guide, boat, lunch

10:00 Departure from Rabac port
12:00 Arrival to Cres town, sightseeing
13:00 Departure from Cres
13:45 Lunch served on the ship
Free time for swimming
15:00 Departure to Rabac
17:00 Arrival to Rabac

BRIJUNI ISLANDS – full day

The archipelago of Brijuni is made up of 2 main, forested islands (Veli & Mali Brijuni) and 12 smaller ones to the northeast of Pula, opposite Fažana.

Tito (former president of former-Yugoslavia) promoted this spectacular jewel of unspoiled nature into a premier international tourist destination. From 1949, until his death in 1980, Tito used to spend 6 months in his residence on Brijuni, every year. In those years he hosted over 90 heads of state as well as many famous film stars on the island.

Today, the Brijuni Islands are still a magnet for many famous names of the international jet set.

In 1984 the group of islands were proclaimed a National Park and a memorial centre.

On Brijuni we can find the remains of a roman villa and a lake, a byzantine fort and ruins from the venetian rule.

A special attraction of Brijuni is a small zoo/safari park with many exotic animals that were brought as gifts to Tito by the visiting dignitaries. Traces of dinosaurs have also been found.

The tour of the island is mainly by a tourist train, therefore it does not involve too much walking.

11:50 –departure from Rabac
12:30– arrival to Fažana
13.00 – boat transfer to Veli Brijun
13:15 – Sightseeing tour
17:00 - boat transfer to Fažana
17:15 - departure to Rabac
18:30 - arrival to Rabac

PULA - half day

On the southernmost part of the Istrian peninsula, according to myth, Jason and Medea founded the town Polai, the source of life. Later the Romans changed it into a divine town for the "pleasure of the rich". Today it is known as Pula, Croatia.

The city is best known for its many surviving ancient Roman buildings, the most famous of which is its 1st-century amphitheater. Known locally as Arena, it is the sixth largest amphitheater in the world. One of the best preserved amphitheatres from antiquity, Arena is still in use today for summer film festivals.

Continue your walking tour with visits to other notable and well preserved ancient Roman structures including the Sergius Arch and the temple to the God Apollo (from the outside), built in the honor of the 1st-century Roman emperor Caesar Augustus. Among other sites you will visit are the Roman city gates and walls.

Included: coach, guide

Note: entrance to the amphitheater is not included; guests can visit the Amphitheatre during free time.

08:45 –departure from Rabac

09:45 – arrival to Pula

12:45 – departure from Pula

13:45 - arrival to Rabac