

Cycling Europe

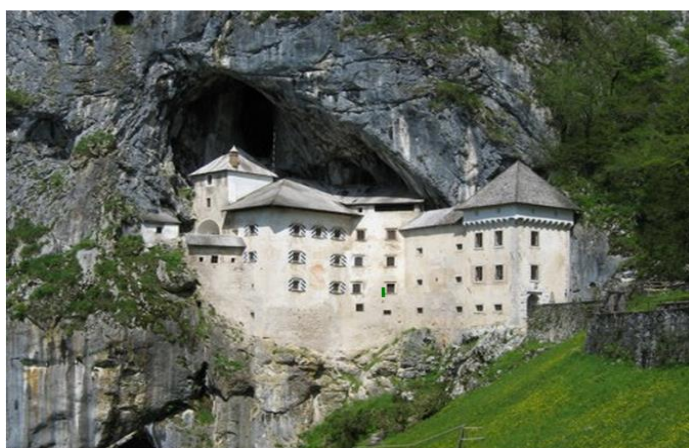
THE BEST OF SLOVENIA CYCLE TOUR 2020

SELF GUIDED CYCLING - 11 days/10 nights



The tiny country of Slovenia is a special gem for biking. Nestled between the Alps and the Adriatic Sea, Slovenia has a wealth of quiet country roads, impressive scenery, natural beauty and friendly people. Begin your tour at stunning Lake Bled, at the foot of the Julian Alps with its iconic island church. You'll find villages steeped in tradition en route to gorgeous high-altitude Lake Bohinj which is overlooked by Mt Triglav, highest mountain in Slovenia. Journey to Ljubljana, with its unique Austrian flavour and vibrant cultural scene; visit the fairytale cave in Postojna; the world-renowned Lipizaner horses, the seaside town of Koper located on the Adriatic coast, and the last stop is in former Venetian town of Piran.





ITINERARY

Day 1: BLED

Tour starts with 1st night in Bled, a picturesque town that is surrounded by mountain peaks and borders a gorgeous lake. Bled's medieval castle is perched atop a steep cliff overlooking the lake and was the seat of power for South Tyrolean bishops for over 800 years. It now houses a small museum dedicated to the area's history.

We can book transfers from Ljubljana Airport or Ljubljana City for additional cost.

Day 2: BLED- BOHINJSKA BISTRICA (BOHINJ VALLEY (27km + 16.5 km side trip to Savica Falls)

Your bike will be delivered this morning, and you will be taken by bus up to the high plateau at Pokljuka. From here you can marvel at the stunning views before gliding down into the neighbouring Bohinj Valley, the jewel in the heart of the Triglav National Park. Cycle through the many small alpine villages scattered across the valley until reaching the small settlement of Ribčev Laz (Fisherman's Pass), lying next to the stunning Lake Bohinj. Wedged into the corner of the valley, Bohinj is the largest and deepest lake in the national park, and is surrounded by snow-capped mountain peaks. The view across this lake from the bridge at Ribčev Laz is unrivalled. Cycle around the lake to the Savica Falls, the source of the Sava Bohinjka River, and then take the cable car up to Vogel Mountain for a spectacular view into the Bohinj Valley and of Mount Triglav, the highest peak in the Julian Alps. Explore the forests surrounding the lake before spending the evening in one of the cosy village pubs and trying the local home-made honey brandy. Easy decent, cycling downhill, at the foot of Mount Triglav, in Triglav National Park.

Day 3: BOHINJSKA BISTRICA – ŠKOFJA LOKA (49 KM)

Leaving Bohinj you cycle to the lovely village of Bohinjska Bistrica, where you can admire the picture-perfect backdrop. Then it's up 750 m/2400 ft to the Jelovica high plateau

Recommended: optional transfer to top of mountain pass must be booked in advance, €20 per person.

From the top the route takes you through a forest which soon drops off into the Selška Dolina Valley leading to the Škofja Loka hills. The first stop is at the little alpine village of Sorica, set among low green hills. This is the birthplace of the famous Slovene painter, Ivan Grohar. As you ride into the village his statue will greet you. Visit his gallery where you'll find a limited collection of his work.

The next stop is at the historic iron-smelting town of Železniki, where you will find the remains of an old blast furnace dating from 1826. Stop in one of the village inns along the way and try the delicious



trout. Finally you arrive in the wonderful town of Škofja Loka, one of the oldest towns in Slovenia. If you are not too tired you can cycle up to the castle on the hill overlooking town. Spend the rest of the evening wandering through the old streets of this historic medieval town.

Day 4: ŠKOFJA LOKA – LJUBLJANA (31 km)

Flat lands, easy biking trip. 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 siècle” 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 centre. 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.

Note: The hotel in Ljubljana is 3-star, 2.2 km from old city centre (5-10 min by bike, 20 min walk, or €5 taxi), there is the option to upgrade to a 4-star hotel in Ljubljana that is more central – see price list.



Day 5: LJUBLJANA – VRHNIKA (39 km) + 18 km optional trip to Iski Vintgar Valley



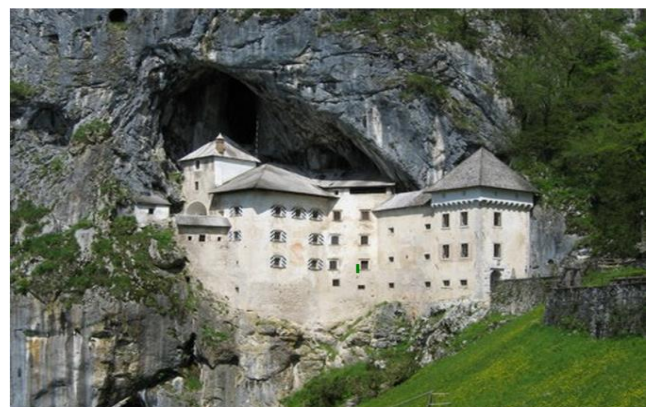
A nice easy cycle day across the historic and richly diverse plains surrounding the capital. As the morning sun begins to rise high in the sky, you will be cycling across an immense 160-square kilometre marshy plain. The Ljubljansko Barje was once a great lake until it dried up 6000 years ago, leaving behind an incredibly diverse landscape 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 6: VRHNIKA – POSTOJNA (32 km + 12 km optional side trip to Rakov Škocjan nature reserve).

A slightly more demanding day over gentle hills, forest roads and a typical Carst polje (field). 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 7: POSTOJNA – ŠTANJEL (42 km + 6 km optional side trip to Predjama Castle).

Easy cycling routes, one long descend followed by some hills. 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 kilometres. The 1 1/2 hour tour will take you through a fairytale world full of large and colourful



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 side trip 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.

Day 8: ŠTANJEL – LIPICA – DIVAČA (48 km)

The typical karst village of Štanjel is in the heart of vineyard country, where you will see a museum of traditional houses built entirely from the surrounding limestone. The nearby region was once host to the WWI Battle of Isonzo; visit the many touching monuments here. You will also visit a local artist and painter. Try the food in the local hotel: delicious Carst ham (pršut) and tasty wine from one of the many nearby domestic cellars. Enjoy the great vistas from Štanjel village and a visit to the lovely *Štanjel Castle*.



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 Lipicaner 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.

Re. Lipica Horses: From June to September performances are at 3pm on Tuesday, Friday and Sunday and 11.00am on Saturdays. Cost is approx. €23 Euro per person, and includes a guided tour of the stud farm. There are also guided tours of the Stud farm every day on the hour from 10.00am until 5.00pm. Reservations are not needed in advance (€16, approx 50 minute tour).

Website: <http://www.lipica.org/en/what-to-do>

Day 9: DIVAČA – MUGGIA (38km + 19 km side trip to Trieste)

If you skipped the Postojna caves, this morning you can visit Škocjan Caves – no less interesting but way less frequented karst caves and listed as a UNESCO natural monument. You can take a slight diversion into the Italian town of Trieste – once an important port with its worldly flair and wonderful atmosphere. Visit the old city centre, castle, cathedral and Piazza Unita central square. Trieste was once part of Slovenia whilst under the rule of the Austrian monarchy.

Relax with a cappuccino in the many old-fashioned cafes. Cycling along the coast you will reach your destination of the old town of

Muggia in time for a gelato or to relax on one of many beaches.



Day10: MUGGIA – PIRAN (37km + 11 km side trip to Seca salt pans)

Cycle along the coast on new cycling path following former railway line. Enjoy great vistas of the Slovene coast and Trieste Bay. A coffee stop in the fashionable resort of Portorož is a must. The trip ends in the gorgeous Venetian harbour town of Piran (3* hotel). Bikes will be collected at 6 pm.

Day 11: TOUR ENDS IN PIRAN.

Arrangements end after breakfast. We can book transfers back to Ljubljana, or on to Trieste from here.



GRADE: Moderate: Suitable for cyclists of moderate fitness, some days are graded easy. Electric bikes can be requested.

2020 SCHEDULE

Self-guided tour, start any day between 14 March and 10 October.

Low Season: 14 Mar – 08 May & 19 Sept- 10 Oct 2020

High season: 09 May – 18 Sept 2020

2020 COST PER PERSON IN EURO

Twin Share room (Low season)	€ 955
Twin Share room (High season)	€ 985
Single room supplement	€ 220
Half board supplement	€ 165 (8 dinners only)



Bike Rental 9 days: €130

21 gear "trekking" bikes are equipped with a pannier bag per bike AND one odometer, spare tube, basic puncture repair kit, set of Allen keys per couple/pair of bikes. Bike is delivered at 9.00 am on Day 2 at the hotel in Bled, and ends on evening of arrival in Piran. Additional days bike hire at €15 per day. An extra odometer can be supplied for €20, payable direct.

Electric bike rental € 260 for 9 days. A security deposit of €100 in cash is required at beginning of tour, this will be refunded at the end of the tour if there is no damage to bike.

Helmet hire €18 per person (HELMETS MUST BE WORN IN SLOVENIA BY LAW)

Additional luggage: One piece of luggage & a handbag is free of charge. For every additional item there will be additional surcharge of €10 – to be paid locally.

2020 TOUR COST INCLUDES:

- Accommodation in 3 & 4 star hotels for 10 nights in rooms with private facilities
- Breakfast daily
- Bus transfer on Day 2 from Bled to Pokljuka Plateau
- Luggage transport between hotels (1 piece per person, maximum 20 kgs, extra bags cost €10/bag payable locally).
- Information package including maps detailed route description (one per room).
- Welcome briefing and bike fitting on arrival
- Backup service (hotline) during the tour
- GPS Data

2020 TOUR COST DOES NOT INCLUDE:

- Arrival & departure transfers (transfers can be booked for additional cost – see below)
- Optional Transfer Day 3 to top of Mountain pass €20 per person (recommended)- Please request at time of booking
- Bike insurance: bikes are only insured against minor breaks and normal wear up to €10 per bike. They are not insured against theft or frame break. €100 deposit for E-bikes.

EXTRA NIGHT COST PER PERSON IN EURO:

Bled 3* hotel	€ 69 share twin, €100 single room, 3 course dinner €15
Bled 4* hotel	€ 84 share twin, €143 single room, 4 course dinner €25
Ljubljana 3 * hotel	€ 58 share twin, € 83 single room, Dinner €15
Ljubljana 4 * hotel	€84 per person share twin € 111 single room, Dinner €15
Piran 3 * hotel:	€69 share twin, €100 single room, Dinner €15

TRANSFER COST PER PERSON IN EURO: (Minimum 2 persons)

Ljubljana Airport to Bled € 30
Ljubljana City to Bled - price on request (€50 -€55)
Klagenfurt Airport (Austria) to Bled € 70
Piran to Ljubljana Airport € 75
Piran to Ljubljana Downtown € 65
Piran to Bled €90
Piran to Trieste downtown / train station €40
Piran to Trieste Airport € 60.

BEST OF SLOVENIA – 8 days/7 nights

There is a more condensed version for fitter cyclists, with higher kms per day and less time for sightseeing. Please ask for details.



Book through:

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