



Croatia: The Dalmatian Islands 2010

10 days from \$3,295

Including roundtrip international airfare and air fuel surcharges

Trip Extensions: **Pre-trip: Dubrovnik 2010 3 nights \$395**
 Post-trip: Zagreb 2010 2 nights \$445

Available Tour Dates: **August, September, October**

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What's Included

- Roundtrip international airfare
- 8 nights in 3- and 4-star hotels
- 14 meals - 8 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 4 dinners
- Transfers
- AND the option to add our Low-Cost Trip Extension: Pre-trip: Dubrovnik - 3 nights \$395 Post-trip: Zagreb - 2 nights \$445
- FREE use of our custom VBT bicycle and helmet
- Service of two bilingual VBT Trip Leaders
- FULL VAN SUPPORT
- Daily route directions and maps
- Welcome reception with local brandy and hors d'oeuvres
- Sightseeing and cultural activities
- 5% Frequent Traveler Credit to use on your next VBT vacation
- Special Good Buy Discount



Rating Level: Moderate

Scenic Views

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Itinerary

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Average Daily Temperature:

Split:

Apr 63°	Aug 84°
May 72°	Sep 77°
Jun 79°	Oct 68°
Jul 85°	

1-800-245-3868

Interested in a tour?

Talk to one of our
Tour Consultants
for details.

Day 1 of PRE-TRIP EXTENSION Depart US/Fly overnight to Dubrovnik

Depart from the U.S. for Croatia. The particulars of your arrival overseas are detailed with your flight itinerary and airline tickets.

Day 2 of PRE-TRIP EXTENSION Arrive in Dubrovnik/Begin your Trip Extension in Dubrovnik

Upon arrival at the airport, a VBT representative meets you and helps you transfer to your centrally located hotel, where you receive a welcome package with information on things to see and do during your stay.

Once settled, you have the rest of the afternoon to explore Dubrovnik and its ancient walled city overlooking the Adriatic. This is an independent extension with no VBT Trip Leader.

Day 3 of PRE-TRIP EXTENSION Independent Exploration of Dubrovnik

After breakfast, the day is yours to explore all that has made this city the new darling of Southern Europe. Stroll Dubrovnik's Stradun (the Old City's main thoroughfare), take a guided walk atop the fortress wall, or enjoy a refreshing swim at the beach near your hotel. You may book an optional guided tour of the old city at your own expense—you must reserve this optional tour with your VBT representative upon arrival.

Day 1 of AIR PACKAGE Depart US/Fly overnight to Split

Depart from the U.S. for Croatia. The particulars of your arrival overseas are detailed with your flight itinerary and airline tickets.

Day 4 of PRE-TRIP EXTENSION Independent Exploration of Dubrovnik

After breakfast at the hotel, explore more of this world-class city on your own. You may book an optional tour of Cavtat and Konavle Valley at your own expense—you must reserve this optional tour with your VBT representative upon arrival.

Day 2 of AIR PACKAGE Arrive in Split, Croatia/Transfer to hotel

Upon arrival at the Split airport, claim your luggage and clear customs. Our local representative, who will be holding a VBT sign, meets you outside the customs area in your arrival terminal. (At this time, please plan ahead: Verify with your airport representative the time of your end-of-trip transfer from your Split hotel to the airport.) Today, VBT's local representative arranges your minibus transfer (approximately 30 minutes) to your hotel in Split, where you begin your trip.

At the hotel, you receive a City Information Packet, which includes a map to help you explore the city. (If you arrive early, your hotel room may not be available until noon. You can store your luggage at the Reception Desk.)

Now a modern port city, Split's old town center remains charming. The center grew up around the Emperor Diocletian's vast Roman palace, which remains one of the largest and best-preserved from the Roman period. Visit the medieval Brace Radica Square in the southwest corner of the palace: Its tall Marina Tower is all that remains of the imposing castle, built by the Venetians in the second half of the 15th century. When you're ready for a rest, head to Split's Riva promenade to sip coffee, grab an ice cream and enjoy the view.

Day 5 of PRE-TRIP EXTENSION Transfer to Split/Join VBT Air Package guests

This morning your VBT representative meets you and helps you transfer up the coast to Split. (Your transfer time is given on arrival at your Dubrovnik hotel.) This journey by coach takes approximately four and a half hours. Ensure you have your passports available as you cross into the neighboring country of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Day 1 of BIKE TOUR Meet Trip Leaders/Transfer from Split to the Island of Brac/Warm-up ride/Welcome Reception

VBT No-Air Package guests: Your VBT Trip Leaders and the rest of the group meet you at the Art Hotel in Split (address: Ulica slobode 41, 21 000 Split, Croatia; telephone: +385 (0) 21 302 302) at 9 a.m. If you are scheduled to arrive at the ferry port in Split later than 11 a.m. or if you are delayed, you must take a taxi, a ferry, and then another taxi at your own expense. In the event of a late arrival you will need to travel on your own to Hotel Pastura in Postira on the island of Brac (approximate cost 30 euros/\$39 USD, travel time approximately 2 hours). Please contact Hotel Pastura (telephone: +385 (0) 21 740 000) to advise of any travel delays or changes, as they will pass the message on to your VBT Trip Leaders.

VBT Air Package and Pre-Trip Extension guests: Meet your VBT Trip Leaders at the Art Hotel in Split at 9 a.m. Your Trip Leaders will be wearing VBT staff garments. Please have your bags out for collection before 8 a.m. so they may be transferred to the ferry ahead of the group. The group will leave the hotel at 9:30 a.m. for the short walk to the port for your ferry, which

sails at 11 a.m. for the port of Supetar on the island of Brač.

Across from the ferry terminal in Split, you may purchase something to eat from one of several small restaurants or grocery stores to bring along during the one-hour journey to the island of Brač.

On arrival at the port of Supetar, minivans transfer the group to the village of Postira and to the Hotel Pastura, your home for the next three nights. This welcoming, four-star hotel's location is convenient and quiet, and features comfortable, air-conditioned rooms with balconies.

A charming and quiet village now, Postira's history dates back to the 14th century. Eight kilometers from Supetar, Postira is nestled between ocean and hill, embraced by centuries-old olive fields and pine groves. One of this town's most famous sites is the remains of a basilica in Lovrecina, a bay with a very beautiful sandy beach.

In the afternoon, join your Trip Leaders for a safety and bike-fitting session, followed by a short warm-up ride along Postira's harbor and a loop to the picturesque village Dol. Later, we gather for a welcome cocktail reception on the terrace, followed by dinner at the hotel.

Day 2 of BIKE TOUR Cycle from Postira to Pucisca and Skrip/Visit stonecutters' school/Home-hosted dinner

Start your ride to Postira, following a quieter road along the scenic north coast and passing through simple villages bordered by fig and olive trees. Enjoy views across to the mainland throughout the ride. Stop in the port town of Pucisca and visit the Pucisca's stonecutters' school for discussion and discovery. Brač's world-renowned stone has been used in the construction of some of the world's most famous buildings, including Diocletian's palace in Split and the White House in Washington, D.C. See students' work and learn what happens at one of the world's few remaining stonecutting schools.

After the lunch on your own choose to shuttle back to the hotel or cycle back to Postira. Today's long option is to continue past Postira to Skrip and back to Postira. Skrip is the oldest settlement on the island and source of the stone that made it famous. Upon returning to the hotel, use your free time to relax or walk to the beach.

Just prior to dinner, your Trip Leaders give an introduction to the Croatian language. Use your newfound skills tonight as you share a simple but authentic Croatian dinner in a local home. We always connect with our hosts during this event, and it gives us a chance to witness daily life on this breathtaking island.

Day 3 of BIKE TOUR Shuttle to Vidova Gora, the Summit of the Adriatic/Ride through rural villages/Visit Milna, the Bay of a Thousand Ships/Traditional lunch

After breakfast, we shuttle by coach to the highest point on the island, Vidova Gora. This lookout, known as the summit of the Adriatic, affords some breathtaking views. From here, enjoy more great scenery as we ride down through the villages of Nerezisca and Lozisca.

At Lozisca we will ride a 9-mile loop down to the port of Milna, the most beautiful marina on the island. We will stop and relax for an included traditional lunch prepared "under the bell," a slow-cooking process with the most savory results. Afterward, we'll continue toward the port town of Sutivan and then along the coast back to our hotel in Postira via Supetar.

Tonight, you may explore the typical Croatian restaurants in town. Your Trip Leaders can make recommendations.

Day 4 of BIKE TOUR Bike to Bol and Zlatni Rat Beach /Boat ride/Explore Hvar town and fortress

This morning, say goodbye to your hosts and transfer by coach across the top of the island to bike from the base of Vidova Gora to Bol, the location of the most famous beach in all of Croatia, Zlatni Rat (meaning "Golden Horn"). This spit of land reaches out into the water with a gently sloping beach.

Your ride today takes you through the easy terrain and ancient medieval settlements of Praznica and Gornji Humac – real examples of how Brač towns and villages developed from separate homes, usually shepherd's houses. Enjoy breathtaking views on a few kilometers downhill to the Zlatni Rat Beach in Bol.

Swim in the Adriatic's crystal-clear water before lunch on your own in the town of Bol.

Just after lunch, board a private boat to Jelsa on the island of Hvar. Then, board a coach for the ride to your hotel in Hvar town. In the event of inclement weather, this transfer operates as noted below.

Nearly 42 miles long and 7 miles wide, and only 3 miles at its narrowest point, Hvar is the most famous and seductive Adriatic island. Along with Bali, Zanzibar, Mykonos and Capri, Hvar has been called "one of the most beautiful islands in the world" by Conde Nast Traveler magazine. Its permanent population of 12,000 people clusters on the west of the island, adjacent to the most fertile and protected land.

Upon arrival at the hotel, your Trip Leaders accompany you on a 20-minute group walk along the waterfront promenade to the charming harbor front in Hvar town. Then, explore Hvar, a medieval Croatian town with a strong Venetian influence dating to the 16th century. Visit the Arsenal, built in 1612 as the first municipal theatre—Europe's oldest and perhaps it's smallest. Its purpose was to bring the aristocratic and bourgeois classes together, and it stands as a symbol of reconciliation of social class and abolition of privilege. Women were not admitted until the second half of the 19th century. Walk Saint Stephen's Square, the largest square of the Adriatic after Saint Mark's Square in Venice then take a brief hike uphill from the square for dramatic views across the island from a 12th-century Spanish fortress. Afterward, return on foot to the hotel. Hvar currently is a celebrity hot spot. You'll enjoy the tranquility and incredible location of your hotel, just around the corner from the bustling harbor front.

The Adriatic, with a private beach exclusive to hotel guests, is your swimming pool.

Diving, including a short course for first-time divers, is available from the hotel waterfront at additional cost. If you chose this activity, one or at least a half day of biking would be skipped.

This evening, enjoy a group dinner at our hotel over a glimpse of the sea.

Inclement Weather Itinerary:

If rough weather makes it impossible for our chartered ferry to operate, guests travel between Brac and Hvar on the large car ferries that operate via Split. This creates a longer travel day. The two ferry rides are separated by a two-hour visit to Split, where you take a discovery walk and enjoy lunch on your own. Inclement weather may make the promoted activities impossible.

Day 5 of BIKE TOUR Ride Hvar's dramatic wilderness/Explore Stari Grad

After a leisurely breakfast, ride past fields of poppies, rosemary and lavender. The ride starts with a steady hill rising for about 4 miles to the village of Brusje, and rewards you with a sparsely inhabited and dramatic landscape crisscrossed by a seemingly endless number of stone walls. Views stretch across the sea to neighboring islands and the mainland. If you prefer, start the ride in Brusje and ride to Stari Grad finishing with a 4-mile downhill into this authentic Dalmatian town situated at the end of a narrow bay. Originally founded in the 4th century BC, the town's main square offers a number of options for lunch on your own.

For a greater challenge, two long ride options are available to continue past Stari Grad. After lunch, you can continue biking to pass near Jelsa and climb toward Poljica into an even more remote environment, finishing in Velika Stiniva ("Big Cliff") after a 2-mile downhill ride. Enjoy a swim, and later be shuttled with our VBT van back to our hotel.

Back at the hotel spend the afternoon swimming, walking to town, or on an ocean dive. Dinner is on your own.

Day 6 of BIKE TOUR Ride through lavender fields/Explore Vrboska harbor

Today's ride, certain to be a highlight of your trip, is relatively flat. It carries you through verdant fields, quiet stone villages and alongside the narrow harbor between Vrboska and Jelsa.

Your first destination, Vrboska, an adorable small harbor, is famous for its fortified church. Unique in all of Croatia, the structure resulted from a strange but necessary alliance between the church and the secular need for fortification from invaders. From here, ride the flat and scenic road on the edge of the fjord filled with small coves perfect for a cooling dip (don't forget your swimsuit!). End the morning with a provided picnic in the old fishing port of Jelsa, where you see the well-maintained houses of local ship captains. Bring your swimsuit and take a refreshing dip before riding on to Stari Grad.

Ride through the mountain village of Pitve. With its traditional stone houses, konobas (wine cellars) and terrace gardens, Pitve epitomizes the island towns of Croatia. Then, shuttle back to the hotel from Stari Grad in the late afternoon, or opt for a longer ride that brings you back through Brusje to Hvar.

Tonight, walk to a nearby home hosted by Margita and Boris and learn how to prepare some of the best local dishes together in a group cooking lesson. Dalmatia is known for its Prosek (sweet wine) and Plavac (local red wine); taste both over a festive farewell dinner on a terrace that overlooks the Adriatic.

Day 7 of BIKE TOUR Transfer to Split/Free time/VBT No-Air Package ends

VBT No-Air Package guests: After breakfast, transfer back to the port of Split, arriving at approximately 1:15 p.m. (Important: Flight departures from Split airport prior to 4 p.m. are not recommended. If you depart earlier, you must make transfer arrangements from the last hotel at your own expense. Taxi cost from Split harbor to Split airport is approximately 300 Croatian Kuna /\$60 USD; travel time about 40 minutes.)

VBT Air Package guests: Transfer after breakfast by ferry and van to the Art Hotel, Split, for your final overnight stay (travel time approximately three hours). Arrive around 2 p.m. then spend the rest of the day shopping or relaxing in one of the city's outdoor cafes.

Day 8 of AIR PACKAGE Depart for US or begin your optional extension in Zagreb

VBT recommends you check the time of your transfer with your Trip Leaders during the week. The transfer is prearranged and prepaid.

* Note: For guests with early-morning departures, breakfast at the hotel may not be available. Please check with the Front Desk to verify the times that breakfast is served.

** VBT transfer times and departure points are finalized in advance and cannot be modified for individual guests. If you extend your stay beyond the scheduled program dates, return transportation to the airport will be at your own expense.

Day 1 of POST-TRIP EXTENSION Independent exploration of Zagreb

If you have chosen the optional Post-Trip Extension transfer to Zagreb, please confirm your transfer time with your Trip Leaders during the week.

Our local transfer guide will escort you inland to Zagreb, the capital of Croatia. En-route you will stop at the Plitvice Lakes

National Park, which was granted UNESCO World Heritage status in 1979. The beauty of the National Park lies in its 16 lakes, inter-connected by a series of waterfalls, and set in deep woodland. Our local guide will help you experience some of this splendor.

Upon arrival into Zagreb, check into your centrally located hotel, where you receive a City Information Package that will help you enjoy your stay. The rest of the day is yours to explore the city independently. Meals are on your own

Day 2 of POST-TRIP EXTENSION Independent exploration of Zagreb

Today is yours to explore a city that is famously divided into three parts: the thousand-year old Gornji grad (upper town), which contains the Presidential Palace, the historic church of St. Mark's, the Croatian parliament, and museums and galleries, all set in cobbled streets lit by gas lamps; the 19th-century Donji grad (lower town) with its shops, restaurants, cafes, theaters and parks; and the modern post-World War II Novi Zagreb (new Zagreb), full of high-rise buildings with little to offer visitors.

Zagreb is called a "City of Museums" because there are more per square foot than in any other city in the world. But this doesn't mean there is nothing else for you to do if you aren't a history buff. One of the many pleasures that the Zagrebcani (the people of Zagreb) enjoy is sitting in one of the numerous cafes watching the world go by. And in the evening, you can visit one of the many restaurants, sampling a delicious Croatian dish.

Day 3 of POST-TRIP EXTENSION Zagreb Extension concludes/Depart for home

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your flight home. Please be sure that you are waiting at the designated transfer time and location. The transfer is prearranged by VBT and is prepaid.

Please note: VBT transfer times and departure points are finalized in advance and cannot be modified for individual guests. If you extend your stay beyond the scheduled program dates, return transportation to the airport will be at your own expense.

Note: For guests with early-morning departures, breakfast at the hotel may not be available. Please check with the Front Desk to verify the times that breakfast is served.