

# Croatia Bike & Boat: Split & the Dalmatian Islands, Aboard the Jadranska Kraljica

## Bike Vacation + Air Package

Island hop across Croatia's Dalmatian coast on an elegant private ship. As you glide through serene Adriatic waters, exploring hidden beaches known only to locals, you'll congratulate yourself for choosing VBT's Bike & Boat cruise and skipping the ferry queues. Cycle a new island each day—discovering an olive farm on Korčula, a medieval village on Hvar, and a seafaring museum on the remote island of Vis. While cycling along the shores of the Pelješac Peninsula, you'll experience its natural beauty from all angles. Finish each day with a dinner of local specialties prepared by your ship's crew—and discover the art of Croatian cooking during a class with your ship's captain. Through it all, you'll enjoy the ongoing support, companionship, and local expertise of the VBT trip leaders who call these islands home.

## Cultural Highlights

- Explore the medieval fortress and fascinating fishing museum in the tiny village of Komiža on the island of Vis.
- Cycle into historic cities central to the past and culture of the Dalmatian Islands: Korčula, Hvar, Jelsa, Stari Grad, Postira, Pučišća.
- Learn some Croatian cooking tips during a demonstration with your onboard chef – and savor the results for dinner.
- Visit one of the last remaining stonecutters' schools on the island of Brač.
- Taste unique Dalmatian wines in one of the well-known local wineries.

## What to Expect

This tour offers a combination of rolling terrain and moderate-to-challenging hills and is ideal for everyone from energetic beginners to experienced cyclists. Our VBT support vehicle is always available for those who would like a break from riding.

**Tour Duration:** 11 Days

**Average Daily Mileage:** 4-28 miles

**Average Cycling Time:** 1-4 hours

**Group size:** 14-24 max

## Climate Information

### **Average High/Low Temperature (°F)**

May 71°/56°, June 79°/63°, July 85°/67°, August 84°/67°, September 78°/61°, October 69°/54°

### **Average Rainfall (in.)**

May 2.4, June 1.9, July 1.1, August 1.7, September 2.6, October 3.4

## **FLIGHT DAY: Depart from the United States or Canada**

Your vacation is about to begin! Spend your first night aloft and arrive ready for an unforgettable trip.

## **ARRIVAL DAY: Arrive in Split**

A VBT representative will greet you at the airport to start your adventure off right. A complimentary car service brings you to your hotel in Split. So beautiful is its seaside setting that the 3rd-century Roman Emperor Diocletian chose this place as his retirement home; remarkably, his ancient palace still plays a central role in the city's daily life, hosting shops and restaurants. There'll be time to settle into your hotel before setting out for dinner on your own, wandering the labyrinthine warrens, passageways, and courtyards.

## **DAY 1: VBT Bicycling Vacation begins / Sail to Vis Island / Welcome reception and dinner**

This morning, join a local guide for a private walking tour of Split. This fascinating modern city grew up around the ancient palace of Emperor Diocletian. Still today, locals live and play out their lives among its millennia-old walls and gleaming white stone quarried on the nearby island of Brač, which you will be visiting later. View its highlights and see the octagonal Cathedral of Domnius.

Enjoy a lunch on your own in one of Split's excellent restaurants, then meet your VBT trip leaders in town, and walk together to the ship to check into your cabin as the ship sets sail toward Vis Island. Enjoy a rest on board before joining a safety and bike-fitting session, as well as a short warm-up ride if time allows. Later, gather for a welcome cocktail and dinner on board.

Today's Ride Choices

Afternoon: Warm-up — 7 km (4 miles)

What to Expect:

An easy out-and-back ride along the coast outside the town of Vis, with one minor hill to climb.

Cumulative Distance Range: 7 km (4 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

## DAY 2: Loop island ride in Vis / Lunch in Komiža

You have the entire day to discover Vis, the farthest island from Croatia's shore inhabited by locals. The fishing heritage is rich here, as Vis has long been isolated from other sources of livelihood. Today, an active viniculture also thrives on this relaxed, low-key island. Following your first breakfast on board, pedal along on a beautiful, scenic route to the old fishing village of Komiža, set between dramatic green hills and the shimmering ocean.

Stroll the seaside promenade past the fishing museum for a glimpse of the region's rich past and seafaring ways. Enjoy a delicious lunch in one of the local restaurants, located directly at the picturesque marina. After lunch, ride back to your ship over scenic hills, taking in breathtaking Adriatic vistas. If you prefer, get a lift from the shuttle and explore the town of Vis, perhaps visiting the Notre Dame Church or strolling to admire Renaissance summer houses built by the nobility. Or walk to the nearby rocky beach for a refreshing dip in the Adriatic. This evening, enjoy dinner on board. You moor overnight in Vis.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Vis to Komiža — 30 km (19 miles)

Afternoon: Komiža to Vis — 11 km (7 miles)

What to Expect:

Ride quiet and fully paved country roads. The route features a couple of hills, especially during the afternoon ride. The support vehicle is available back to the ship if you prefer to pass on the afternoon ride.

Cumulative Distance Range: 30 – 41 km (19 – 26 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 3: Cycle Korčula Island / Visit an olive farm

A three-hour sail this morning delivers you to Vela Luka (meaning “big harbor”) on the splendid island of Korčula. Not only is this one of the most beautiful Dalmatian islands, it is also beloved for the golden-hued Grk wine produced at its vineyards. Your morning ride leads you into a stunning landscape of karst hills to one side and glittering Adriatic waters to the other. Some hill climbing brings you to spectacular lookout points. Your destination is a working olive farm, lush with gnarly olive trees that have grown here in the Adriatic sun for generations. Pause to visit with the owners and enjoy a tour of its ethnographic collection of olive presses, learning about the island’s long tradition of harvesting. Later, you stop for a traditional Croatian lunch at the family-owned Konopica restaurant. Sample the homemade Uštipci bread and enjoy a local *peka*, a traditional dish slow-cooked under a cast-iron, dome-shaped baking lid.

After lunch, continue cycling to Grad Korčula, the island’s cultural center and alleged birthplace of Marco Polo. This fascinating town was laid out in a herringbone configuration on a scenic promontory. The resulting grid allows for easy air flow and protects its citizens from strong mistral winds in the warm summers. All its narrow streets are stepped, except the Street of Thoughts, so called because there’s no need to watch your footing as you stroll.

This evening, enjoy a dinner on your own in town. You’re sure to find the ideal spot in Grad Korčula, affectionately called “mini Dubrovnik” for its authentic medieval atmosphere. Your ship docks in Grad Korčula tonight.

### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Blato to lunch — 23 km (14 miles)

Afternoon: Lunch to Korčula — 22 km (14 miles)

### What to Expect:

Today, expect all paved country roads with limited traffic. The VBT support vehicle is available should you need assistance throughout the day.

Cumulative Distance Range: 23 – 45 km (14 – 28 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

## DAY 4: Cycle the Pelješac Peninsula / Wine tasting / Afternoon swimming

Sail this morning to the mainland and the scenic Pelješac Peninsula. This finger of land pointing into the Adriatic has been compared to Tuscany for its wine production. Upon arrival, you join a shuttle to Donja Banda to begin a magnificent morning of cycling amid dramatic landscapes. You first stop in the village of Kuna at a donkey farm, to take some photos with the long-eared residents.

Continue to the world-famous Grgić Winery to spend an unforgettable hour enjoying a wine tasting, before returning to the ship for lunch on board.

Time to lift the anchors and set sail to one of the smaller islands near Korčula. Leave your bicycle on shore and have the afternoon at leisure to swim, paddleboard, or simply relax with a book on the sun deck. This evening, join a cooking class on board to learn from the chef how to prepare a favorite Croatian dish that you savor for dinner. You moor tonight on the anchor (weather permitting).

### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Donja Banda to Trstenik — 23 km (14 miles)

### What to Expect:

Upon docking on the mainland, take a short van shuttle to skip the busy traffic and uphill climbs. The remainder of the ride follows mainly flat or downhill routes on quiet and paved country roads. There is no biking in the afternoon.

Cumulative Distance Range: 23 km (14 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 5: Ride the coast of Korčula / Sail to Hvar

This morning, enjoy a short sail toward the end of Korčula Island to Lumbarda. On this spectacular island,

you disembark for a scenic ride along the breathtaking coastline. Maybe take a swim before returning to the ship to enjoy an onboard lunch.

Back on board, you cruise to Hvar. Celebrated as the most beautiful island in the world, it is a wonderland of lavender fields, fruit orchards, fragrant pine forests, and superb beaches. You'll have the chance to take it all in when you cycle among its pristine vistas tomorrow. For now, enjoy an afternoon stroll in Hvar Town, where you moor for the night (subject to change, depending on availability).

### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Lumbarda to Račišće — 22 km (14 miles)

### What to Expect:

Ride along well-paved country roads today. The area around Grad Korčula can be busy with traffic during the main tourist season, but most of your ride follows quiet and scenic roads along the seacoast. The support vehicle is available should you need assistance throughout the day.

Cumulative Distance Range: 22 km (14 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 6: Explore Hvar Town / Cycle to Stari Grad / Captain's farewell dinner

Disembark after breakfast for a short walk across Hvar Town, a medieval Croatian settlement with a strong Venetian influence dating to the 16th century. Take in the expanse of Saint Stephen's Square, the largest Adriatic square after Saint Mark's in Venice. And see the Arsenal, built in 1612 as Europe's oldest and perhaps smallest municipal theater.

After, ride past Hvar's stunning panoramas of fertile fields filled with flowers and herbs and dramatic, sparsely inhabited landscape crisscrossed by stone walls. You can admire views across the sea to neighboring islands and the mainland. The road into Stari Grad, a charming Dalmatian town situated at the end of a narrow bay, is a glorious four-mile (6.5 km) downhill coast. Originally founded in the 4th-century BCE, Stari Grad (literally "old town") features a main square that offers a number of options for lunch on your own. Get acquainted with this gem of a town during the free time to explore on your own.

Continue biking a pleasant road into Jelsa, passing vineyards and olive groves. Your ship meets you in Jelsa at day's end and will remain moored here tonight. There is still an important event in store—celebrate the week on board during the captain's farewell dinner.

#### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Hvar to Stari Grad — 22 km (14 miles)

Afternoon: Stari Grad to Jelsa — 15 km (11 miles)

#### What to Expect:

Today's ride starts with a steady climb of about four miles (6.4 km) out of Hvar Town. Follow coastal roads to Stari Grad, where your trip leaders point out choices for lunch on your own. In the afternoon, continue riding to Jelsa on mostly quieter country roads. Two moderate hills reward you with splendid views. The support vehicle is available should you need assistance throughout the day.

Cumulative Distance Range: 22 – 40 km (14 – 25 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

## **DAY 7: Cycle Brač Island / Visit a stonecutting school / Sail to Split / Private farewell dinner**

This morning, cruise into the beautiful bay of Pučišća. This tiny enclave on the island of Brač is considered one of the prettiest villages in Europe. Disembark here and visit one of the world's few remaining stonecutting schools. The stone that is carved here, quarried from nearby Skrip, has been used to build some of the world's most famous buildings, including Diocletian's Palace in Split and the White House in Washington, D.C. This is a unique opportunity to see students' work and learn about a near-forgotten craft.

After an enlightening visit, cycle the northern coast of the island across the 14th-century village of Postira, nestled between the ocean and hillsides. On the way, you pass centuries-old olive and pine groves. Meet your ship in Postira for lunch on board. After lunch, you sail back to Split, where your trip began. This evening, join your VBT trip leaders for a special farewell dinner in a typical, local restaurant, recounting your favorite moments from your cycling adventure among the magnificent Dalmatian Islands.

## Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Pučišća to Postira — 25 km (16 miles)

What to Expect:

Today's ride starts in Pučišća and follows the north coast of Brač to Dol and Postira, passing ancient groves of olive and pine trees. Meet your ship in Postira for lunch, before sailing back to Split.

Cumulative Distance Range: 25 km (16 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 8: Travel to Dubrovnik / VBT Bicycling Vacation ends

After breakfast, travel by private motorcoach (approximately 3.5 hours) to our 5-star Dubrovnik hotel for a final overnight stay. You arrive at approximately noon and have the rest of the day to relax at the hotel's private beach or explore the historic Old Town of Dubrovnik on your own.

Check your VBT city information for all the options. If you have chosen the independent Post-Trip Extension to Dubrovnik, you'll remain at this hotel for the next three nights.

Included Meals: Breakfast

## DEPARTURE DAY: Departure

After an included breakfast this morning, transportation to the Dubrovnik airport will be provided (approximately a 30-minute drive, depending on traffic) for your departing flight. Please ensure you are ready in the hotel reception area at the designated time.

Included Meals: Breakfast



## Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

### Heritage Hotel Fermai (Arrival Day)

A tranquil haven in the bustling heart of Split, the Heritage Hotel Fermai is housed within a gem of Art Nouveau architecture, lovingly renovated in 2020 and transferred into the modern era with contemporary décor and amenities. The showpiece of the city, Diocletian's Palace, is just one of the attractions mere steps away from the hotel. While here, you'll be welcomed with warm hospitality. Enjoy views of the Old Town and deliciously creative cuisine at the restaurant and bar. Your well-appointed, air-conditioned room features cable/satellite TV, an in-room safe, a coffeemaker, and free WiFi.

### Jadranska Kraljica (Days 1-7)

With generous deck space and modern comforts, the *Jadranska Kraljica*, which means "Adriatic Queen" in English, is ideally suited to take in the beauty of the stunning Dalmatian Islands. With a length of just 130 feet (40 meters) and a width of 27 feet (8 meters), this small ship was one of the first steel boats built in Croatia and can deliver you to small, intimate ports rich in island character, ideal starting points for exploring the islands by bike. Aboard this private VBT charter, enjoy meals prepared by your chef in the intimate dining area, and relax in the ship's bar. Each of the air-conditioned cabins provides a private bathroom with a shower. Note that on some islands, the ship will proceed to meet you at your cycling destination, and you will rejoin it at the ride's end.

### Hotel Dubrovnik Palace (Day 8)

The Hotel Dubrovnik Palace enjoys a dramatic perch right on the Adriatic Sea. With its exclusive private beach, lavish amenities, chic 5-star style, and world-class service, it is the ideal complement to your adventure. Dine on exquisite cuisine and savor locally produced wines while taking in the sunset over the Elaphiti Islands from al fresco venues. And savor massages or facials in the award-winning tenth-floor spa. From your air-conditioned room, you'll enjoy sweeping views of the Dalmatian Coast from a private balcony. Enjoy the best of both worlds here: luxury amenities away from the crowds and easy, convenient bus service to the Old Town when the spirit of exploration moves you.