



Discovering Our Planet Together



Croatia & Slovenia Nature Discovery

Explore the Adriatic Coast & Julian Alps on a Unique & Intimate Itinerary



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Trip Details:

Days

9 Days /
May-Sep

Price

From \$9695

Croatia & Slovenia Nature Discovery

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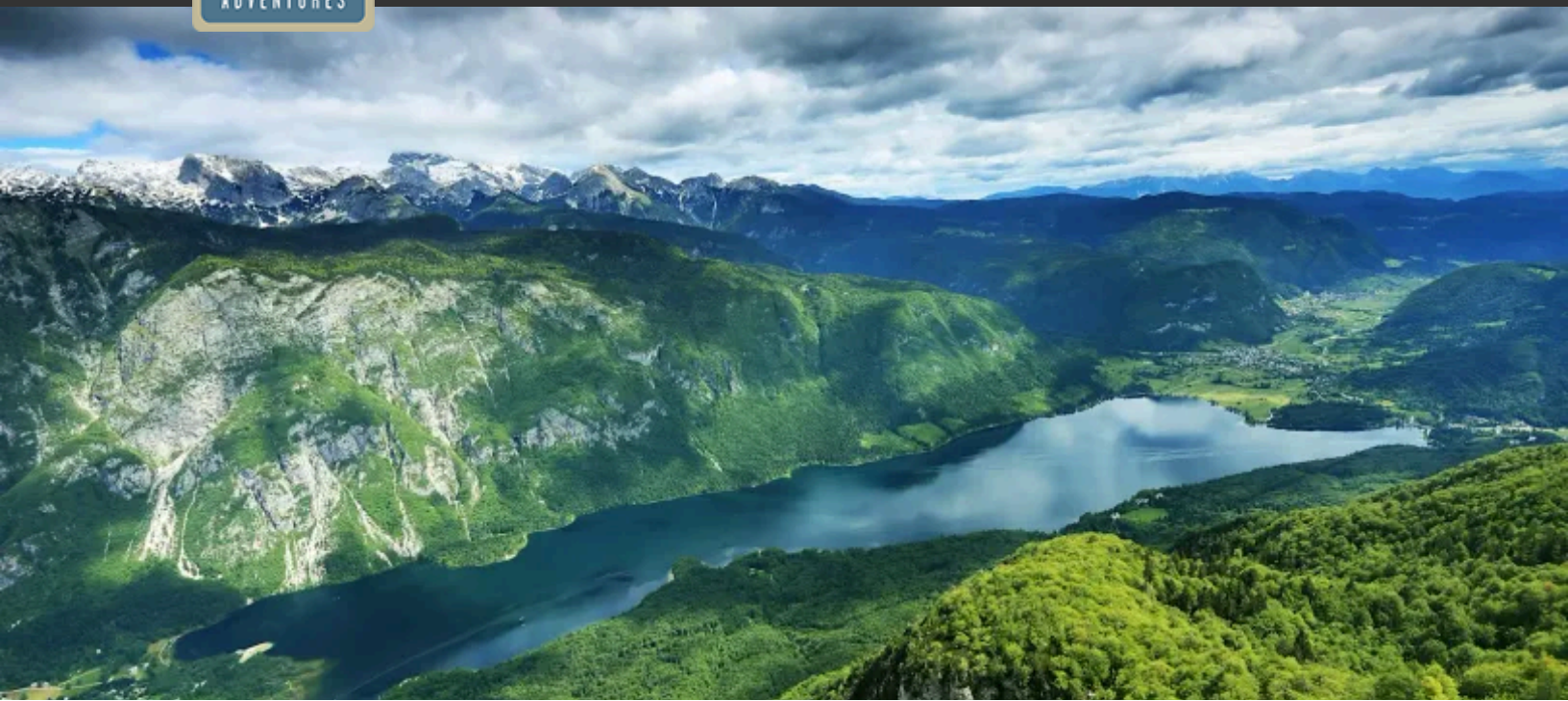
Discover little-known corners of Europe on an intimate nature journey through two diverse Balkan countries. The Dinaric and Julian Alps rise above rugged seacoast and glacier-carved lakes, their karst expanse riddled with caves, gorges, waterfalls and crystalline rivers. Croatia's Dalmatian Coast, speckled with a thousand islands and reefs, offers idyllic Mediterranean scenery. On a private boat cruise in the Adriatic Sea, view a colony of rare griffon vultures on the island of Cres, and admire rocky headlands, turquoise bays and red-roofed villages that cascade to the sea. In Slovenia, ride a cable car to the top of Triglav National Park and wander trails through alpine meadows dotted with wildflowers. Cultural heritage is a rich part of this trip, too, as we visit ancient Roman sites and traditional farms continuing sustainable artisan production of wine, honey and cheese.

Trip Highlights

Explore a dramatic limestone wonderland spanning two countries, an unspoiled mountain region where wildflowers, waterfalls and butterflies abound

On a private boat cruise among less-visited isles off Croatia's Dalmatian Coast, visit a reserve protecting endangered griffon vultures on the island of Cres

On behind-the-scenes interactions with local artisans, meet beekeepers, cheesemakers, vintners, truffle hunters and olive oil producers, and taste their fine fare



Trip Details:

Days

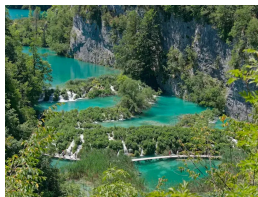
9 Days / May–Sep

Price

From \$9695

Croatia & Slovenia Nature Discovery Itineraries

Explore the Adriatic Coast & Julian Alps on a Unique & Intimate Itinerary



2026 Itinerary

In 2026, our journey includes a hike in the karst landscape of Croatia's Paklenica National Park with an overnight on the island of Pag. In 2027, we will no longer stay on Pag but instead add an extra night at Lake Bled in Slovenia to facilitate a visit to the Skocjan Caves. All other itinerary inclusions are the same.



2027 Itinerary

New for 2027, our journey includes a guided tour of Skocjan Caves in Slovenia, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that is one of the world's most impressive karst landscapes. We have also replaced a single-night stay on Pag in Croatia with a third night at Lake Bled to facilitate our new routing. All other itinerary inclusions are the same as in 2026.



Itinerary At A Glance

Day 1

Zadar, Croatia—Old Town Walking Tour

Day 2

Plitvice Lakes National Park / Zadar

Day 3

Nin Saltworks / Hiking in Paklenica National Park / Pag

Day 4

North Velebit National Park—Via Dinarica Hiking / Opatija

Day 5

Cres Island—Private Boat Cruise to Griffon Vulture Reserve

Day 6

Hum / Truffle Hunting / Private Wine & Olive Oil Tasting / Buzet

Day 7

Slovenia—Hiking the Pokljuka Plateau / Bee Farm / Lake Bled

2026 Itinerary

Explore the Adriatic Coast & Julian Alps on a Unique & Intimate Itinerary

Day 1: Zadar, Croatia—Old Town Walking Tour

Arrive in Zadar, where you are met at the airport and transferred to our hotel in the historic Old Town. Zadar lies on Croatia's northern Dalmatian Coast and is one of the most ancient cities on the Adriatic Sea—archaeologists have found traces of a Neolithic settlement here dating to the 9th century BC. Zadar was eventually conquered by the Romans as they advanced to the eastern shore of the Adriatic, beginning in the 3rd century BC.

On a walking tour of the Old Town this afternoon, observe how Zadar's streets were laid out on a Roman rectangular grid, with a forum, thermae and water system elements. When the Holy Roman Empire split in the late 3rd century, Zadar became part of the Eastern Roman Empire, known as Byzantium, and remained the capital of Byzantine Dalmatia until the end of World War I. The city's 16th-century Venetian fortifications are part of UNESCO's Venetian Works of Defense World Heritage Site. Highlights include the Roman Forum, ancient city walls and gates, prominent churches and cathedrals, and the Sea Organ, an architectural musical instrument “played” by sea waves. Reconvene this evening for a welcome dinner with our Expedition Leader at our hotel.





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Itinerary At A Glance

Day 8

Hiking in Mostnica Gorge / Artisan Cheese Tasting / Triglav National Park—Lake Bohinj

Day 9

Bled / Ljubljana / Depart

Day 2: Plitvice Lakes National Park / Zadar

Travel inland to Plitvice Lakes National Park for an all-day discovery of one of the world's most impressive karst landscapes, designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site for its extraordinary natural features and undisturbed production of travertine. Contained by natural limestone dams, 16 turquoise lakes are linked by crystalline streams, cascading waterfalls and terraced pools—a dynamic environment with a soundscape as enchanting as its visual beauty. On an easy guided hike over boardwalks that lace the park, discover the fascinating features of the karst environment, defined by soluble stone that has formed caves, sinkholes, sinking springs and terraces.

The healthy forest habitat that covers three-quarters of the national park supports wildlife, including native trout, deer, wild boar and even Eurasian lynx and highly endangered brown bears, although mammals are virtually never seen, staying far away from paths and people. Keep an eye out for some of the park's 168 bird species, however, which include woodpeckers, raptors and tits. Especially notable are Plitvice's 321 butterfly species, including several that are critically endangered. We'll hope to identify some as we follow the trails that wind among the lakes and lush forest. More than 1,400 flora species and subspecies are also found within the park, representing nearly 30% of the entire Croatian flora. Return to Zadar late this afternoon.

Day 3: Nin Saltworks / Hiking in Paklenica National Park / Pag

In the nearby town of Nin, we visit the famous Nin Saltworks. For 1,500 years salt has been collected by hand from the pans. Ecologically produced by the sea, sun and wind, salt from Nin is therapeutic and biodynamic, used for culinary, cosmetic and health purposes. A valued commodity over the centuries, during the Roman Empire it was exchanged ounce for ounce with gold, and soldiers were paid in salt. The Roman term for such compensation was *salarium*, from which the word "salary" originates. After a 500-year hiatus, Nin Saltworks reopened in 1954, producing salt using traditional methods. On a guided walk along the salt pools, learn how natural salt is made and harvested.

Later this morning, continue to Paklenica National Park, part of Velebit Mountain UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. Lying on the southeast slopes of the Velebit range near the coast and cut by two deep, vertical-walled gorges, the park's rugged karst landscape is one of the most pristine and dramatic in the entire Mediterranean. It contains the highest peaks in the Velebit Mountains, rising to nearly 6,000 feet and offering lofty views of coast and mountains alike. We take an easy hike through the beech and black pine forest, then continue to the island of Pag, where we have dinner and spend the night.



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Day 4: North Velebit National Park—Via Dinarica Hiking / Opatija

Head into the wildest part of Croatia to walk a few miles along the Via Dinarica, threading its way through North Velebit National Park. This 1,200-mile trekking route knits together Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo and Albania, tracing the spine of the Dinaric Alps down the Balkan Peninsula. Combining a network of old shepherd trails, ancient trading paths, strategic war routes and new connections, it weaves through limestone karst fields, meadows, valleys, beech forest and alpine lakes, traversing a pristine slice of wild Europe. The biodiversity of this region make this one of the most impressive sectors of Croatia's Dinaric Alps, which are among the most rugged and extensive of Europe's mountains. More than 1,000 species of mountain flora thrive here, including edelweiss and European mountain pine. Overhead, look for golden eagles soaring on high. En route, survey a vista over the Adriatic that includes the islands of Pag, Rab, Goli, Prvic and Krk. Cultural heritage within the park is a highlight, with remnants of centuries-old dwellings, old cattle pens and dry stone walls.

Continue this afternoon to the Opatija Riviera where our 4-star boutique hotel overlooks the Adriatic Sea, backdropped by the green slopes of Mount Ucka. Popular in the 19th century with the Austro-Hungarian elite, the Opatija coast remains a stylish vacation destination. This evening, walk the seafront promenade along Kvarner Bay to a traditional restaurant where we enjoy local specialties, including fresh seafood for dinner.

Day 5: Cres Island—Private Boat Cruise to Griffon Vulture Reserve

A private boat tour to the island of Cres reveals a large colony of rare griffon vultures that nest on cliffs directly above the sea. Protected since 1969 in the world's first reserve for this species, they are among the largest birds on Earth, weighing 15-25 pounds and boasting a wingspan up to 9 feet. They live up to 40 years, feeding exclusively on the carcasses of large and mid-sized mammals, never eating live prey. In this regard, they play a hygienic role in the ecosystem, helping to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. We also visit the Beli Rescue Center for Griffon Vultures, dedicated to preserving this strictly protected species. Injured birds are brought here to be rehabilitated, mostly young ones that fall from their nests into the sea on their first flight attempts—the mortality rate for young vultures in their first year is a staggering 75%. They produce only one egg a year, so rescuing each bird is crucial. The Cres reserve is also home to other bird species such as the golden eagle, eagle owl, peregrine falcon, kestrel, raven, shag, blue rock thrush and more. On this day, we also have an opportunity to swim in the clear, turquoise waters of the Adriatic Sea. Return to Opatija this evening for dinner.



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Day 6: Hum / Truffle Hunting / Private Wine & Olive Oil Tasting / Buzet

Leaving Kvarner Bay, we drive across the Istrian Peninsula to reach the medieval hamlet of Hum, reputedly the smallest town in the world, with fewer than 25 residents. Our route follows the Glagolitic Alley, a road between Roc and Hum along which stone monuments erected in the late 20th century represent letters of the medieval Glagolitic alphabet, an archaic Slavic script that survived in Croatia until the late 19th century. Hum's size belies its rich thousand-year-old history, although its town walls and fortifications are a reminder of regular battles fought over the centuries.

This morning, we visit with a local truffle hunter who tells us all about this coveted culinary treasure and how trained dogs are used to sniff them out. We'll search the Motovun Forest for truffles with our host and his hound, then it's off to a family-run winery to sample various Istrian wines and olive oil, followed by lunch. Our drive continues this afternoon through a landscape of green hills and white limestone soil planted in vineyards and olive orchards. Springs nurture wildflower meadows and peaceful stands of forest. Following narrow roads through old Istrian villages, we ultimately, we reach our hotel in the medieval hill town of Buzet, with its characteristic red-tiled roofs.

Day 7: Slovenia—Hiking the Pokljuka Plateau / Bee Farm / Lake Bled

Depart Croatia this morning and enter Slovenia, crossing the forested Pokljuka Plateau. This rounded karst mountain in Triglav National Park was carved by the Pokljuka Glacier, leaving many peat bogs that provide habitat for varied plants and animals. The plateau is little traveled but exceptionally scenic, covered in pine, beech and Norway spruce and punctuated by hidden precipices and sinkholes, grassy pastures and scattered villages. We take a hike at the base of a rocky hillside where birds are abundant: look for Western Bonelli's warbler, white-throated dipper, red-backed shrike and gray-headed woodpecker, plus numerous butterflies. Reaching the end point, we are rewarded with a striking view of the high peaks surrounding us. We stop for lunch at a family-owned mountain hut, enjoying a visit with our hosts and learning about their traditional mountain lifestyle.

Slovenia is considered the heart and soul of beekeeping in Europe, and we visit a family farm this afternoon to learn about the long practice of apiculture. One of the apiaries here is 90 years old. Our hosts teach us about the life of bees and how honey is produced and extracted. Slovenia is renowned for the quality of its honey, which we will taste in different forms, including pollen (when in season), honey liqueur and homemade gingerbread. Late this afternoon we arrive in Bled, its fairytale setting offering Slovenia's most famous view. In the middle of Lake Bled lies Bled Island, crowned by the Church of the Assumption of Mary, the subject of countless idyllic photographs. The church on the island dates to 1142, but its current facade reflects its Baroque renovation in the 17th century. This evening, enjoy dinner at a local restaurant overlooking the picturesque lake.



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Day 8: Hiking in Mostnica Gorge / Artisan Cheese Tasting / Triglav National Park—Lake Bohinj

This morning, take a walk through Mostnica Gorge, a narrow chasm cut by a clear alpine river that tumbles down the ravine in a series of rapids and waterfalls. Afterward, stop for an artisan cheese tasting in a nearby village famous for its cheese production, which dates to the 13th century. The first cheeses were made by mountain farmers who grazed their cattle in summer on the lush slopes above Lake Bohinj.

Lake Bohinj is the crown jewel in the Julian Alps, and it's never far from view as we explore Triglav National Park in the afternoon. We ride a cable car to the top of the Vogel ski area to access a hiking wonderland, with grand views of the snow-cruled peaks and sparkling lake far below. Ascending the ski slopes on a final chairlift through a dwarf pine forest, we reach a panoramic plateau below the summit of Mount Vogel, where there's time to wander alpine trails or simply enjoy the vista of the from the meadows at the top of the lift. From the top, we walk back down to the cable car (or ride the lift if you prefer), then descend to the valley far below. We cap off our Balkan sojourn with a farewell dinner this evening.

Day 9: Bled / Ljubljana / Depart

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Day 6: Slovenia— Skocjan Caves / Bee Farm / Lake Bled

Depart Croatia this morning and enter Slovenia, where our first stop is one of Europe's most impressive natural phenomena. On a guided visit to the Skocjan Caves, we explore the vast underground karst system at this UNESCO World Heritage Site. The caves are the creation of the Reka River, where its erosive force has corroded the karst landscape to such an extent that it has created 4 miles of underground canyons, waterfalls and passages to a depth of 650 feet, including one of the largest known underground chambers in the world. The caves hold status in the Alpine Network of Protected Areas and UNESCO Wetlands of International Importance, with wild habitat supporting highly specialized land and water cave animal species.

This afternoon, we visit a family farm to learn about the long practice of apiculture in Slovenia. The country is considered the heart and soul of beekeeping in Europe, and one of the apiaries on the farm is 90 years old. Our hosts teach us about the life of bees and how honey is produced and extracted. Slovenia is renowned for the quality of its honey, which we will taste in different forms, including pollen (when in season), honey liqueur and homemade gingerbread. Late this afternoon we arrive in Bled, its fairytale setting offering Slovenia's most famous view. In the middle of Lake Bled lies Bled Island, crowned by the Church of the Assumption of Mary, the subject of countless idyllic photographs. The church on the island dates to 1142, but its current facade reflects its Baroque renovation in the 17th century. This evening, enjoy dinner at a local restaurant overlooking the picturesque lake.

Day 7: Mountain Hiking on the Pokljuka Plateau

Some lovely subalpine hiking is in store today atop the forested Pokljuka Plateau. This rounded karst mountain in Triglav National Park was carved by the Pokljuka Glacier, leaving many peat bogs that provide habitat for varied plants and animals. The plateau is little traveled but exceptionally scenic, covered in pine, beech and Norway spruce and punctuated by hidden precipices and sinkholes, grassy pastures and scattered villages. On a hike at the base of a rocky hillside, birds are abundant: look for Western Bonelli's warbler, white-throated dipper, red-backed shrike and gray-headed woodpecker, plus numerous butterflies. Reaching the end point, we're rewarded with a striking view of the high peaks surrounding us. We stop for lunch at a family-owned mountain hut, enjoying a visit with our hosts and learning about their traditional mountain lifestyle. Later this afternoon, return to Lake Bled with time to wander the waterfront and enjoy the tranquil setting.



Discovering Our Planet Together

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Our trip comes to an end this morning with a transfer to the airport in Slovenia's nearby capital of Ljubljana.



Accommodation Details:

Hotel Bastion

Hotel Boskinac

Amadria Park Beach Hotel Royal

Hotel Vela Vrata

Hotel Starkl

For detailed descriptions, visit
nathab.com/cultural-journeys/croatia-slovenia-nature-travel/accommodations

Croatia & Slovenia Nature Discovery Accommodations

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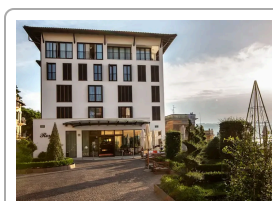
Hotel Bastion

This Relais & Chateaux boutique hotel is optimally located in Zadar's Old Town, blending vestiges of medieval heritage and architecture with contemporary design.



Hotel Boskinac

Hidden among vineyards and olive groves on the island of Pag, Boskinac is a small family-run luxury hotel offering an integrated experience of hospitality, food and wine.



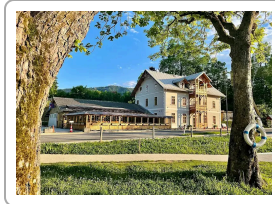
Amadria Park Beach Hotel Royal

This stylish hotel on Croatia's Opatija Riviera is set directly on the seaside promenade, with a sweeping view of the Adriatic Sea and a private beach for guests.



Hotel Vela Vrata

Tucked away on a narrow cobble street in Buzet's medieval Old Town overlooking the serene Mirna River Valley, this boutique hotel exudes local Istrian heritage and tradition.



Hotel Starkl

This chalet-style heritage hotel overlooking Lake Bled enjoys a storied history going back more than a century, with current family owners that have given it a complete renovation in 2021 while preserving its vintage character.



Awaken Your Wonder in the Wilder Side of the Balkans

Croatia is celebrated for its sun-soaked Adriatic coast and storied seaside towns, while Slovenia is emerging as Europe's next great discovery. Yet some Croatian icons, like Dubrovnik, now overflow with tourist throngs. Nat Hab offers another path—into the Balkans' quiet sanctuaries and national parks, where wilderness and culture thrive. This two-country journey is designed for nature travelers seeking immersion that conventional tours simply can't provide.

1 A Nature-Focused Itinerary

By concentrating on the wild side of Croatia and Slovenia, we provide in-depth access to secluded habitats and experiences far beyond typical tourist routes. Journey amid river-carved canyons, alpine peaks, pine-studded Adriatic islands and dense forests that recall Europe from centuries ago. Along the way, meet local people who still live close to the land, blending cultural encounters with an immersive exploration of nature at its most elemental.

2 Active Exploration for In-Depth Nature Encounters

To get the most out of your Balkan nature adventure, we spend plenty of time exploring on foot. Among our outings, we hike a short portion of the Via Dinarica long-distance trekking path through Croatia's Dinaric Alps and wander trails on top of Slovenia's Triglav National Park, overlooking Lake Bohinj far below—views you can't get from a vehicle!

3 Major Highlights the Nat Hab Way

While we love showing you the less-traveled realms of Croatia and Slovenia, we also make time for some of the region's beloved popular spots. But we do it our way, strategically timing our visits to avoid crowds. For instance, we'll head into Plitvice National Park in the quiet morning hours to enjoy its turquoise lakes and dramatic waterfalls before others arrive.

4 Fabulous Local Food and Wine

On this adventure, dining is part of the experience. Sample seafood pulled fresh from the Adriatic that morning, olive oil from Dalmatia's islands, local honey and cheeses, and wines from revived ancient traditions. In Croatia and Slovenia, every meal reflects the region's character, making food a true highlight of your journey.

5 Travel with Just 10 Guests...and TWO Expedition Leaders

Our small group size lets us explore remote areas and stay in traditional places that large tours and cruise passengers never experience. With fewer people, the journey is more peaceful and comprehensive. Plus, with two guides for groups of six to ten guests, we can divide into smaller cohorts, tailoring activities and ensuring exceptional personal attention.



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6 Support Local Wildlife Conservation Efforts

Although many of the region's native species have diminished populations, one remarkable bird is staging a comeback: the endangered griffon vulture. With just one egg produced each year, every individual matters. Protected since 1969 in the world's first reserve of its kind, griffon vultures rank among the largest birds on Earth. We visit their reserve as well as the Beli Rescue Center, where injured vultures are rehabilitated and returned to the wild.

7 Outstanding Naturalist Expedition Leaders

We're known for the quality of our guides, and you'll find that the leadership on this trip is no exception. With a deep knowledge of the coastal and alpine ecosystems in Croatia and Slovenia, your Expedition Leaders enhance your adventure in a way that makes you feel safe, cared for and enlightened. [Read our Expedition Leader bios](#) and traveler comments regarding the quality of our leaders.

8 Our Quality-Value Guarantee Ensures a Rewarding Experience

With Natural Habitat Adventures, you get our exclusive guarantee, promising that we will meet the lofty expectations set in our promotional materials. To our knowledge, this is the most impressive guarantee made by any adventure travel company. [Read our important promise for yourself!](#)

9 Feel Good About Your Carbon-Neutral Journey

We care deeply about our planet, as we know you do. When you travel with us, the carbon emissions from your trip are 100% offset—including your round-trip flights from home. Natural Habitat Adventures has been the world's first carbon-neutral travel company since 2007.



Dates & Pricing Summary:

Prices:
From \$9695

Group Size:
Limited to 10
Travelers

Croatia & Slovenia Nature Discovery Dates, Pricing & Info

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2026 Departures

Departure	Return	Notes
May 30, 2026	Jun 7, 2026	\$9995 USD
Jun 20, 2026	Jun 28, 2026	\$9995 USD Habitat Club Pricing Available
Jun 30, 2026	Jul 8, 2026	\$9995 USD
Jul 11, 2026	Jul 19, 2026	\$9995 USD Habitat Club Pricing Available



Discovering Our Planet Together

Dates & Pricing Summary:

Prices:
From \$9695

Group Size:
Limited to 10
Travelers

Departure	Return	Notes
Jul 21, 2026	Jul 29, 2026	\$9695 USD Women's Journey , Habitat Club Pricing Available
Aug 4, 2026	Aug 12, 2026	\$9695 USD
Aug 15, 2026	Aug 23, 2026	\$9995 USD
Sep 5, 2026	Sep 13, 2026	\$9995 USD

2027 Departures

Departure	Return	Notes
May 21, 2027	May 29, 2027	\$10795 USD
May 30, 2027	Jun 7, 2027	\$10495 USD
Jun 8, 2027	Jun 16, 2027	\$10495 USD
Jun 20, 2027	Jun 28, 2027	\$10495 USD
Jun 29, 2027	Jul 7, 2027	\$10495 USD
Jul 11, 2027	Jul 19, 2027	\$10495 USD
Jul 20, 2027	Jul 28, 2027	\$10495 USD
Aug 1, 2027	Aug 9, 2027	\$10495 USD
Aug 10, 2027	Aug 18, 2027	\$10495 USD



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Departure	Return	Notes
Aug 22, 2027	Aug 30, 2027	\$10495 USD
Aug 31, 2027	Sep 8, 2027	\$10495 USD
Sep 12, 2027	Sep 20, 2027	\$10495 USD



Discovering Our Planet Together

Pricing

See <https://nathab.com/cultural-journeys/croatia-slovenia-nature-travel/dates-fees> for the latest pricing details.

Included

Accommodations, services of Nat Hab's professional Expedition Leader(s) and local guides, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on final day, some gratuities, airport/train station transfers on Day 1 and final day, private boat tour to the island of Cres, all activities and entrance fees, all taxes, permits and service fees.

Not Included

Travel to and from the start and end point of your trip, alcoholic beverages, some gratuities, passport and visa fees (if any), optional activities, items of a personal nature (phone calls, laundry and internet, etc.), airline baggage fees, required medical evacuation insurance, optional travel protection insurance.

Important Information About This Trip

While our focus on this unique itinerary is extensively on nature, and we spend most of our time immersed in beautiful and wild landscapes from the Adriatic Sea to the Julian and Dinaric Alps, please be aware that this is not a wildlife-centric trip. While we might see a few animals here and there, and we do visit a special island reserve dedicated to the conservation of endangered griffon vultures, wildlife is not a prominent highlight. Be assured, however, that your experience will include magnificent natural places that conventional itineraries don't offer—our guests come home wowed by the diverse landscapes we encounter, and our connections with local people living on the land in rural areas.

Mandatory Insurance

Since the areas we travel to are remote and wild (that's why we go there!), we require that all guests have, at minimum, medical evacuation insurance for this program. This is for the safety of all guests. We require that your chosen independent insurance plan includes at least \$250,000 in medical evacuation coverage.

To protect your investment and to provide peace of mind while you travel, we also strongly recommend purchasing comprehensive travel insurance. Plans may cover everything from medical treatment to trip cancellations and delays and lost luggage. Please contact our office if you would like more information about the medical evacuation and comprehensive travel insurance policies we offer by calling 800-543-8917.

Getting There & Getting Home

This trip begins in Zadar, Croatia, and ends in Ljubljana, Slovenia. **You must arrive in Zadar by 2:30 pm on Day 1** in order to join a welcome presentation and walking tour of the city at 3:30 pm.

You may depart from Ljubljana at any time on the final day, though we recommend flights before 1 pm for the smoothest experience.

Our Natural Habitat Adventures Travel Desk can best assist with your travel reservations, as our staff is familiar with the specific requirements of this program and can help arrange the most efficient itinerary. Please call us at 800-543-8917. While we offer the best available rates to us on airfare and additional nights accommodations, you may occasionally find special web rates or lower fares online.



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