

Bicycle Tours in Croatia: Explorer: Cycling Istria

OVERVIEW



Cycle on a mixture of paved and gravel surfaces to cross three borders as you travel through Istria, the largest peninsula in the Adriatic Sea. Begin in Trieste Italy, once the most important port of the Austro-Hungarian Empire until it became a part of Italy after WWI. Then cycle along Slovenia's stunning Adriatic coastline and explore well-preserved medieval cities along the way. Get a surprising taste of a verdant landscape reminiscent of Tuscany as you cycle the rolling hills of Istria's interior. Return to the coast and the crystal blue water of the Adriatic Sea but instead of Slovenia you are now in Croatia! Your cycling journey ends with a transfer to Pula, the largest city in Istria and a former Roman outpost featuring cobblestone streets and an incredible Roman Amphitheater.

Learn more about what is included and what to expect on your Explorer tour at the [Explorer Tour Style page](#).

HIGHLIGHTS

Bike through three countries, Mediterranean cuisine, Coastal riding, Porec, Parenzana Trail (Rail to Trail network), Motovun, UNESCO World Heritage Site in Poreč, medieval hilltop towns

TOUR FACTS

Tour Style	 Explorer: Learn more about our Explorer tours at https://www.experienceplus.com/tours/bike-tour-styles/explorer-tours
Includes	8 days, 7 night's accommodation; meals as noted in itinerary; GPS with pre-loaded tracks; support vehicle; 2 bilingual tour leaders.
Countries	Croatia
Begin/End	Trieste, Italy / Group transfer to Pula, Croatia
Arrive/Depart	
Total Distance	312 km (194 miles)
Avg. Daily Distance	52 km (32 miles) per riding day
Tour Level	 Consider that around 50% of the ride will be on dirt paths and roads sometimes with rocky or rough terrain. Your pace will be slower and the perceived effort will be greater than when you are on pavement.
Keep in Mind	We work hard to maintain consistency across all of our tours, but some trips have unique differences. Here are some things to keep in mind about this tour. Learn more about what is included and what to expect on your Explorer tour at the Explorer Tour Style page.

Please Note: We may have small itinerary changes to this trip after you download this PDF document. If you have booked this trip and there are major changes, including changes to towns or activities, we'll email you directly. However, you should always be sure to refer to the  [online itinerary](#) for the most up-to-date trip information including arrival and departure tips before you depart for your trip:

<https://www.experienceplus.com/guided-bike-tours/croatia/explorer-istria>

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DATES & PRICES

Dates	Price	Single Supplement*
📅 May 21-28, 2022	📄 USD\$2995	📄 USD\$450
📅 Sep 3-10, 2022	📄 USD\$2995	📄 USD\$450

*We are happy to match solo travelers who would like to share a room with someone of the same gender. If no match exists, due to hotel pricing, we will charge 50% of the single supplement rate. This fee will be collected at the time of the final payment. If a roommate assignment is available this fee will be refunded at the conclusion of the tour.

DAILY RIDE SUMMARY

Day	Distance/Gain	Terrain	Day Level	Notes
1	Test ride			
2	61km / 794m (38mi / 2604ft)	Hilly	▶▶▶▶▶	
3	54km / 539m (34mi / 1768ft)	Hilly	▶▶▶▶▶	
4	46km / 759m (29mi / 2490ft)	Hilly	▶▶▶▶▶	
5	42km / 303m (26mi / 994ft)	Gentle	▶▶▶▶▶	
6	49km / 700m (31mi / 2296ft)	Hilly	▶▶▶▶▶	
7	61km / 482m (38mi / 1581ft)	Rolling hills	▶▶▶▶▶	
8	Last day			

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ARRIVAL INFO

Meeting time 2 p.m. - on Day 1, meet your fellow cyclists and Tour Leaders at the Day 1 Hotel specified on the itinerary.

As you are planning, remember that the hotels listed in our itineraries are our primary hotels and are - in rare cases - subject to change. Before you make arrangements, [check with us](#) if your tour departure is guaranteed. If your tour departure is out further than 6 months, please also check with us as there might be slight changes to the itinerary.

The below information will help you plan your arrival. For more tips or other routes, you might like [Rome2Rio](#). The fare and timing information listed below is approximate.

We recommend flying into the Trieste Airport (TRS).

How to get to the Day 1 Hotel:

1. Train from Trieste Airport to Trieste Centrale (30 min/EUR 4-5, no pre-booking necessary)
2. Walk 3 minutes to the hotel ([click here for map](#)).

Look up Italian train schedules at [Trenitalia.com](#) or [Trainline.eu](#). Questions? See our information on taking trains in Europe [here](#).

DEPARTURE INFO

Your tour ends on the final day with a complimentary ExperiencePlus! shuttle drop-off at the Pula Airport (PUY), arriving at 10 a.m. (1-hour shuttle) Reservations are required. Please make your shuttle reservation by [emailing us](#) no later than 30 days prior to your tour start date.

If you do not join the shuttle, you will be responsible for your own transportation.

You may also choose to depart from Venice or Trieste, both about 4 hours away (<https://venezialines.com/>).

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Buon Giorno Italia – Trieste

Highlights Test ride and welcome dinner

Welcome to Trieste! The capital of the Friuli Venezia Giulia region has rich Austro-Hungarian and Slovenian influences, and was an important location in the struggle between the Eastern and Western blocs after WWII. This port-town, sits on the coast of the enchanting Adriatic Sea and is a tiny slice of Italy almost entirely surrounded by Slovenia. We will meet in the afternoon for a bike fitting and test ride before enjoying dinner together in this beautiful and multi-cultural city.

DAY 1: Sat, Sep 3rd

Meals Dinner

Lodging  Hotel NH Trieste

Trieste to Buje

Highlights Cycle through three countries! Coastal bike path

Begin the morning warming up your legs in Italy and soon you'll make your first border crossing of the day into Slovenia. We'll follow a cycling path along a stunning section of the coast as we make our way through the charming seaside towns of Koper, Izola, Piran and Sečovlje Saltpans Natural Park, the largest wetland on the coast and famous for its salt production. We'll then cross into our third country of the day, Croatia. Tonight we sleep in a small agriturismo (farm stay) located near the Slovenian-Croatian border. Road Surface: Mostly paved.

DAY 2: Sun, Sep 4th

Distance 61 km (38 mi)

Gain 794 m (2604 ft)

Terrain Hilly

Level 

Meals Breakfast, Dinner

Loop ride to the coast

Highlights The Adriatic coast, the Parenza trail

Today's loop ride takes us to the Croatian coast, with views overlooking Slovenia and Italy to the west before heading inland to the Istrian Peninsula. We will follow part of the Parenzana trail, once a narrow gauge railway which connected Trieste with Porec. In its short operating period (1902-1935) the railway contributed greatly to the economic progress of Istria, transporting local products including wine, olive oil, salt, stone, lime, coal, wood, and passengers. This area is famous for its culinary specialties; in coastal areas you'll find a plethora of traditional seafood specialties and as you move inland the focus turns to wine and olive oil. Make sure Teran wine and extra virgin olive oil are on your list of things to try. Road Surface: 24% gravel, 76% paved.

DAY 3: Mon, Sep 5th

Distance 54 km (34 mi)

Gain 539 m (1768 ft)

Terrain Hilly

Level 

Meals Breakfast

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Buje to Motovun

Highlights Cycling through vineyards, olive groves and medieval villages

Today's ride features rolling hills, medieval villages and olive groves and it's easy to imagine you've been transported to Tuscany, but with far fewer visitors. First you'll cycle to the medieval village of Momjan - famous for its Muscat. The next stop is Groznanj, a small renaissance town also known as the "City of Artists", where almost every house entrance has a small gallery or art studio. We finish the day in Motovun, a medieval hilltop town and the region's truffle capital. Today's ride is a perfect sampling of the cultural richness of Istria's interior. Road Surface: 35% gravel, 65% paved.

Motovun to Poreč

Highlights UNESCO Poreč

This morning, we leave the verdant interior of Istria behind as we cycle back to the coast. We will finish the day in the town of Poreč, recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site for its 6th century Euphrasian Basilica featuring gem-studded mosaics. There are also excellent examples of Romanesque and Baroque architecture, and plenty of great cafés and bars to relax and enjoy a beverage or meal. Road Surface: 64% gravel, 36% paved.

Poreč to Bale

Highlights Inland istria, two-night stay in Bale

We ride back into Istra's interior today. Along the way you'll find quaint villages, beautiful architecture, cycle through the vineyards of Malvasija, farms and medieval hill towns like Dvigrad, which is dominated by the remains of a Roman basilica. Our destination is Bale, a charming medieval town where we'll stay the next two nights. Take your time as you explore the old town, wander around the narrow, cobbled streets within the fortified city walls. Road Surface: 45% gravel, 55% paved.

DAY 4: Tue, Sep 6th

Distance 46 km (29 mi)

Gain 759 m (2490 ft)

Terrain Hilly

Level 

Meals Breakfast

DAY 5: Wed, Sep 7th

Distance 42 km (26 mi)

Gain 303 m (994 ft)

Terrain Gentle

Level 

Meals Breakfast

DAY 6: Thu, Sep 8th

Distance 49 km (31 mi)

Gain 700 m (2296 ft)

Terrain Hilly

Level 

Meals Breakfast

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Loop ride to Rovinj

Highlights Rovinj, the coast

Enjoy another ride to the Istrian coast – as we cycle to the Venetian city of Rovinj. Explore the charming old center, beautiful fishing port and the majestic bell tower of the Euphemia Church built on the highest point in Rovinj. Certainly the city's most distinctive feature, and a coastal landmark, the bell tower commands your attention no matter which direction you approach the city. Tonight we'll celebrate our cycling adventure with a special dinner together. Road Surface: 60% gravel, 40% paved.

DAY 7: Fri, Sep 9th

Distance 61 km (38 mi)**Gain** 482 m (1581 ft)**Terrain** Rolling hills**Level** **Meals** Breakfast, Dinner**Lodging**  Villa Lav

Transfer to Pula – tour end

Highlights Pula

Our tour ends today with a group transfer to Istria's largest city, Pula. We recommend you plan at least one night here to explore the charming cobblestone streets of this well-preserved Roman outpost. Don't miss the Roman amphitheater in the heart of the city and the nearby pristine beaches!

DAY 8: Sat, Sep 10th

Meals Breakfast

INCLUDED**WHAT'S INCLUDED**

When you book a tour with ExperiencePlus! our goal is to ensure your only focus each day is to hop on your bike and explore scenic cycling routes in new destinations. Inclusions may differ depending on which tour style you pick but all ExperiencePlus! tours include the three most important aspects of a guided bike tour.

- Superb tour leaders who are fun and multilingual, bi-cultural experts, and cycling enthusiasts. They will support you and help you navigate confidently on and off the road.
- High quality bikes selected for the terrain you are cycling on and correct bike fitting to ensure comfortable cycling. More details on our [bikes page](#).
- Thoughtfully designed itineraries and routes that take advantage of stunning cycling destinations and the freedom of bicycle travel.

PRE-TRIP SUPPORT

- Bicycle training programs designed specifically for your tour and fitness level.
- Planning tips on what to pack, hotel recommendations and other helpful details from our [Travel Planning Pages](#).
- A gift of your choice (cycling jerseys, socks, or a t-shirt) as our way of saying thanks for choosing ExperiencePlus!
- *Traveler services including assistance booking extra nights at the tour starting and ending hotels. (*Not included on Explorer Tours.)

ON TOUR

- See "What's Included" on your tour Itinerary for tour-specific inclusions.

BICYCLES

For a full list of what's included with your bike see [our bikes page](#). If you would like to bring your own pedals and shoes we recommend doing so. On Explorer tours we include a GPS device on all bikes. We ask that you bring your own helmet to ensure the best fit. Please ask if you would like us to provide you with a gently used helmet and we will do so.

NAVIGATING, DAYSHEETS AND VAN SUPPORT:

Each day you'll receive a daily briefing with a highlighted route map and daysheet (print or digital) that includes information on the day's activities, meals and ride. Daily information also includes Tour Leader phone numbers, hotel information and interesting historical and cultural information.

You'll receive a highlighted route map each day or a briefing with the GPS tracks. On Classic, Bike and Boat, Spotlight and Expedition tours we also navigate using our signature chalk dust arrows. Our arrows make navigating very easy—you may never need to look at the map. On Explorer tours the terrain and destinations are not always conducive to using chalk arrows so we'll ride as a group or you can navigate on your own with the GPS tracks.

Before each tour we offer the opportunity to download GPS tracks of most tour routes to your personal GPS device or smartphone using RideWithGPS.com. We do not provide GPS tracks for tours in South America.

On tour you will have a support van providing water and snack resupply, mechanical assistance, a lift for tired cyclists, and luggage transfers. On some itineraries the van will not be able to follow sections of the route that stray from the road for example onto cycling paths.

Need More Miles? On many days it is possible to add miles to the day, just talk to your tour leader about your options.

Need Fewer Miles? If you aren't sure about your abilities or how much you want to ride remember the support van is available to offer snacks, encouragement, a lift over the next hill, or to the next hotel. You are on vacation and we're here to help make it perfect for you.

TIPPING YOUR TOUR LEADER TEAM:

If you feel your tour leader team has demonstrated great expertise and service, common practice within the travel industry is to tip. Tipping is voluntary and greatly appreciated, and gratuity amounts vary widely. Should you decide to leave a tip, as a guideline, we suggest 5% of the tour cost per traveler – this is for the entire tour leader team, not each tour leader. You can give the tip to any member of the tour leader team, as they share it evenly. In order to avoid social tensions, we encourage you to tip as individuals and not as a group. If you feel your tour leaders did not quite meet your expectations, please let us know. *Tips are included in Expedition pricing.

PHOTOS:

By reserving space on tour, you agree that ExperiencePlus! may use, re-use and reproduce any images, photos or videos sent to us, or taken by our guides or travelers free of charge and without your right to inspection. If you do not want us to use any images of you on tour, you must inform your tour leader in writing at the start of the tour.

STYLES **OUR TOUR STYLES**

We realize that one size does not fit all and there are as many ways to travel by bike as there are different types of cyclists and travelers. No matter what you are looking for in a cycling vacation, we have a tour with just the right pace for you.

Classic Tours: Dream of traveling through a region by bike? then our Classic style bike tours are for you! Our unique chalk arrows lead the way as you explore small villages and world-class cities while traveling at your own pace.

- Tour Length: 7-15 days
- Hotels: 3-4 stars, most itineraries include at least one two-night stay at the same hotel.
- Road Type: Pavement, bike paths.
- Multi-night Stays: Occasionally
- Navigation: Chalk Arrows
- Price: \$\$\$
- Tour Levels: 1-4.5

Explorer Tours: Travel further off the beaten path - we let the destination dictate where we ride, not the road surface.

- Tour Length: 7-8 days
- Hotels: 2-3 stars, occasional multi-night stays at the same hotel.
- Road Type: 30-50% gravel or hard-packed dirt, the rest pavement.
- Multi-night Stays: Occasionally
- Navigation: Group riding and GPS
- Price: \$\$
- Tour Levels: 1-4

Spotlight Tours: Multi-nights stays, loop rides, choose from a selection of activities or enjoy hotel amenities during your free time.

- Tour Length: 6-7 days
- Hotels: 3-5 stars, typically 3-nights spent in one hotel and 2-nights in the other.
- Road Type: Pavement
- Multi-night Stays: Min 2 night stays
- Navigation: Chalk Arrows
- Price: \$\$\$
- Tour Levels: 1-4

Bike and Boat Tours: Spend days cycling and your evenings relaxing on a private boat as you cruise to your next port.

- Tour Length: 7-8 days, some itineraries have land-based extensions available.
- Barge/Boat: 3-4 star, same cabin for the entire boat trip.
- Road Type: Pavement
- Navigation: Chalk Arrows
- Price: \$\$\$
- Tour Levels: 1-4

Expedition Tours: Multi-week tours where you spend long days on the bike with the added satisfaction of pedaling across multiple countries.

- Tour Length: 15-40 days
- Hotels: 2-4 stars, typically there is a 2-night hotel stay every 5-7 days.
- Road Type: Pavement with occasional hard-packed dirt or gravel.
- Multi-night Stays: On rest days
- Navigation: Chalk Arrows
- Price: \$\$\$
- Tour Levels: 4-5

**LEVELS**

We know that travelers have different cycling abilities and preferences for the number of miles, elevation gain, and type of terrain they want on a bicycle tour. We have rated each day of our tours on a scale of 1-5. Our Tour Level's are an average of the day rating on tour. We recommend looking at the daily summary on the PDF and Website Itinerary to see details about each day's ride.

LEVEL 1 - 1.5

Level 1 - 1.5 days will be mostly flat and the distance will rarely exceed 50 km. Level 1 - 1.5 tours are suitable for beginner cyclists, those traveling by bicycle for the first time, or multi-generational groups with a desire for a nice and easy bike tour with plenty of opportunities to stop and enjoy the scenery.

- **Average daily mileage:** 20 - 50 km. (12-30 miles) Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 0-400 M (0-1200 ft)
- **Terrain:** Mostly flat with occasional gentle climbs at a grade of less than 3%, that are sustained for a maximum of 3km. There might be a steeper but short climb.

LEVEL 2 - 2.5

Level 2 - 2.5 days are ideal for riders newer to bicycle touring looking for a bit of a challenge.

- **Average daily mileage:** 30-60 km (18 - 38 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 400 - 600 m (1200 - 2000 ft)
- **Terrain:** Mostly rolling terrain around 3%. Presents multiple 3% to 4% climbs. May present an occasional steeper climb.

LEVEL 3 - 3.5

Level 3 - 3.5 days are great for active individuals (who run, bike, swim etc. on a regular basis).

- **Average daily mileage:** 50-70km (30-45 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 600 - 900m (2000 - 2800 ft)
- **Terrain:** Multiple Climbs with grades of 4 - 6%.

LEVEL 4 - 4.5

Level 4 - 4.5 days are the best riding days for avid cyclists or very active individuals who are excited to challenge themselves on a bike.

- **Average daily mileage:** 70-90km (45-55 miles) Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 900-1000m (2800-3600 ft)
- **Terrain:** Presents multiple steep climbs (6% to 8% grades), 1 to 3km long. Alternatively, 4 – 6% grades for 6 kilometers or more.

LEVEL 5 (EXPEDITIONPLUS!)

Our ExpeditionPlus! tours designed for strong riders looking for the challenge of riding across countries or continents. Long daily mileages mean limited van support so we recommend these tours for riders who feel confident that they can ride every mile.

- **Average daily mileage:** 120 km (75 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 500-2000 m (1600- 6500 ft)
- **Terrain:** Expect and be prepared for any and everything.

REMEMBER

A tour level is the average of the days so we recommend you look at the day level on each day of the itinerary to help you better understand what to expect from your tour.

CHECKLIST

TO DO ONCE YOU'VE BOOKED!

- Read through your Reservation Confirmation (link sent to you by e-mail), it has important information to help you plan your trip!
- Check the date on your passport. The expiration date should extend three months past your date of return to your home country.
- Complete the Customer Information Form: <https://www.experienceplus.com/blog/travel-planning/customer-information-form/>
- We recommend you take out travel insurance. Find details at <https://www.experienceplus.com/blog/travel-planning/travel-insurance/>
- Choose a bicycle training program: <https://www.experienceplus.com/blog/travel-planning/bicycle-tour-training/>
- Peruse our country-specific Travel Planning Pages: <https://www.experienceplus.com/blog/travel-planning/>

6 TO 3 MONTHS PRIOR TO TOUR START DATE

- Review the arrival and departure information under the "Travel Information" tab to see meeting place and time, if a reservation on a complimentary ExperiencePlus! Shuttle (if applicable) is required, and other important information to help you plan your arrival and departure.
- Reserve your flights after you know you have a confirmed tour departure. Please check with our office if you do not know if your trip is confirmed.
- Book your pre and post-tour hotel nights.
- Begin your chosen training program
- Final payment is due 90 days (120 days for Bike & Barge/Boat tours) prior to the tour start. Please refer to your Deposit Payment Invoice and the Final Payment Reminder e-mail you have received for detailed instructions.

6 TO 2 WEEKS PRIOR TO TOUR START DATE

- Start reading one of the books or watching one of the movies from our Reading and Movie Lists: <https://www.experienceplus.com/blog/travel-planning/>.
- Plan what you are going to pack and start packing! Refer to the Packing Lists on our website at <https://www.experienceplus.com/blog/travel-planning/packing/>
- We'll email your Hotel Itinerary, the Participant Roster, names and contact information of your Tour Leaders and other important departure information about 2 weeks prior to your tour start date.

DAY OF YOUR FLIGHT

Get as much sleep on the plane as you can. Pack one day of cycling gear in your carry-on just in case. See you soon!