

SLOVENIA – LAKES, MOUNTAINS AND MEDIEVAL TOWNS

8-day / 7-night easy to moderate **SELF-GUIDED** inn-to-inn cycling from Lake Bled



Slovenia, at the crossroads of Europe, bordering Italy, Austria, Croatia, and Hungary, with a short coastline on the Adriatic Sea, is full of surprises: towering peaks, diverse landscapes and many gems of medieval architecture. This is a green and beautiful country, ideal for cycling. This tour takes in many highlights including the glacial lakes of Bled and Bohinj, Triglav National Park and the resort town of Kranjska Gora. The cycling is mostly on quiet back roads over flat to undulating terrain (hybrid and E-bikes are available).

Start and end your cycling holiday at Lake Bled, easily accessible from the capital Ljubljana. Soak up the dramatic scenery of the Julian Alps, Mount Triglav (the highest peak in Slovenia) and glacial Lake Bohinj. See Škofja Loka and Radovljica, charming towns with well-preserved Gothic and Renaissance architecture. Visit interesting sites like the Museum of Hostages in Begunje, the blacksmithing museum in Kropa where you can learn to forge nails, Radovljica's beekeeping museum, and the painter Ivan Grohar's birthplace. Try the local honey brandy and glory in a cuisine that takes a little bit from Hungarian, Austrian, Balkan and Italian cooking, for a uniquely Slovenian flavour.

Cost from: **\$1385** per person twin share. Single room supplement from **\$295**
Half board supplement **\$230** per person (includes six 3-course dinners)

Departs: Daily on demand from 16th March to 12th October, 2019

Includes: 7 nights' twin-share accommodation in 3- or 4-star hotels; 7 breakfasts; hire of 21-gear touring bicycle with rear pannier and repair kit; luggage transfers (1 bag per person up to 20kg); transfers as per itinerary; route notes and maps (one set per room); personal welcome briefing; emergency phone assistance.

If you opt to pay the Half Board supplement then a 3-course dinner is included on 6 nights.

Not Included: Transfers from Ljubljana (can be pre-booked at extra cost from Ljubljana airport or city centre), other meals, drinks, snacks, personal expenses, excursions, entrance fees. Bike helmet hire is not included – we recommend you take your own helmet or hire one for @ \$25 when booking.

E-bike hire: From \$250 per E-bike per week – limited availability, please request when booking.

Grading: Easy to moderate with daily cycling stages averaging 45km. Day 3 is classed as moderate to challenging (57km with an elevation gain of 750m) and it is possible to get vehicle assistance at extra cost.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations



Suggested itinerary:

Day 1 Arrive Lake Bled

Bled is like a fairy-tale – a medieval castle perched on a clifftop guards the town, its steeped church rises from an island in the lake and mountain peaks soar in the distance. Private transfers can be arranged to Bled from Ljubljana airport or city centre at extra cost, ask for details when booking. This evening meet our local representative for a briefing and to receive your maps, route notes and information.

Day 2 Bled to Rib ev Laz

Cycling @ 20km + optional 16km

Start with a short transfer to the Pokljuka plateau. The limestone plateau is dotted with rustic farmhouses among spruce forest and alpine meadows. Begin your descent to Rib ev Laz, a small fishing settlement at Lake Bohinj's edge. The lake is a photographer's delight – crystalline waters, variously emerald, turquoise or deep blue, with the green-clad slopes of the Julian Alps rising starkly at the far end. In the afternoon perhaps cycle around the lake to the Savica waterfall, or take the cable car up Mt Vogel for views of Mt Triglav and the Bohinj valley. After dinner, relax in one of the cosy village pubs where you can try locally made honey brandy.

Day 3 Rib ev Laz to Škofja Loka

Cycling @ 57km

A moderate to challenging ride with a gradual but long ascent of 750m to Jelovica plateau. If that's too much, you can organise vehicle assistance to the pass at extra cost. From the pass, cycle through forest to Sorica, birthplace of Slovenian Impressionist painter Ivan Grohar, whose painting 'The Sower' inspired the Slovenian 5-cent coin. The small museum here features his work. Your destination is the well-preserved 10th Century town of Škofja Loka. The red-roofed castle dominates from its hilltop perch; if you have the energy a walk or ride up to the castle is highly recommended for its views and its museum. Wander through the Old Town and look for the 14th Century stone Capuchin Bridge arching over the Soca River.

Day 4 Škofja Loka to Preddvor

Cycling @ 33km

A mostly flat ride across the Sora plain, with the peaks of the Kamnik-Savinja Alps as the backdrop, cycling first to Kranj, at the confluence of the Sava and Kokra Rivers. Though much of the city we see today dates to the 16th to 18th Centuries, this spot has been settled since prehistoric times, and there are Illyrian, Celtic and early Slavic archaeological sites nearby. You may like to have lunch in the main square, Glavni Trg, next to the Gothic-Renaissance Town Hall. Finish the day in peaceful Preddvor, on the shores of 'Black Lake' (rnavna Jezero), where the dark green waters are perfect for fly-fishing or swimming.

Day 5 Preddvor to Begunje

Cycling @ 43km + optional 11km

Cycle over flat to undulating terrain to Radovljica, another beautifully-preserved medieval town. It was fortified in the 15th and 16th Centuries and the moat still remains. The main square offers colourful Gothic and Renaissance buildings and the 16th Century Šivec House, with a fresco depicting the parable of the Good Samaritan. The Baroque Radovljica Mansion dominates the square and houses the beekeeping museum (the town has been the centre of Slovenia's honey production for centuries). En route to Radovljica you can detour to Kropa, the iron-forging museum and learn to make nails. End the day in Begunje, birthplace of Slovenian folk musician Slavko Avsenik, where folk music concerts are often held.

Day 6 Begunje to Kranjska Gora

Cycling @ 42 km + optional 15km

Slovenia offers a great sense of history. During World War II, the country was carved up and annexed by Germany, Italy and Hungary. Begunje was occupied by Nazi Germany and the 16th Century Katzenstein manor in the village centre was used as a prison for Slovenian resistance fighters. Many were executed there. The manor is now home to the solemn Museum of Hostages.

Leaving Begunje, follow the Sava River, between the Karawanke range and the Julian Alps, to Kranjska Gora, a ski resort during the winter and activity playground in summer. Perhaps add on a ride to the ski jump site at Planica, where many world records have been set.

Day 7 Kranjska Gora to Bled

Cycling @ 40km + optional 8km

Return into Triglav National Park and tranquil Krma valley, perhaps have lunch at the alpine hut (if open) at the foot of Mt Triglav. From here to the Radovna valley between two high plateaus with a detour to spectacular Vintgar Gorge, carved by the Radovna River from the surrounding limestone. Walk the 1.6km timber walkway in the gorge to the Šum waterfall. Continue on to Bled with time to explore the lake or a climb for the views from Straža hill. Perhaps visit Bled Castle and its museum, or take a traditional rowboat called a *Pletna* to the island and up the 99 steps to the Assumption of Mary Church. Why not end the day with the local speciality *Kremšnita* pastry in a tea shop near the lake?

Day 8 Departure day

Tour ends after breakfast. Extra nights can be arranged in Bled and transfers to Ljubljana at extra cost.



Outdoor Travel offer guided or self-guided inn-to-inn walks in most destinations within Europe including Mont Blanc, the Pyrenees, Tyrolean Alps, Umbria, along the Danube in Germany and many areas in the UK such as the popular **Coast to Coast** trail or West Highland Way in Scotland. We offer pilgrimage walks such as the **Camino de Santiago** in France, Spain or Portugal and the **Via Francigena**, the pilgrim's *Road to Rome*.

Contact Outdoor Travel for more details and reservations:

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