

CROATIA – ISTRIAN PENINSULA, PORE & ADRIATIC COAST

8-day / 7-night centre-based – one-hotel group guided walking tour – a choice of walk levels each day



Often described as a more relaxed, 'old Europe' this walking and sightseeing holiday - amongst the unspoilt green hills of Croatia's Istrian peninsula - offers pretty hilltop towns surrounded by vineyards and olive groves. Our guided walks follow ancient trails past waterfalls and crumbling ruins. We are based near the popular summer resort of Poreč in western Croatia. This historic old town which dates back to the 6th Century has much to see including the gem-studded Byzantine mosaics of the Euphrasian Basilica or the Venetian Round Tower.

The Istrian coast is the largest peninsula in the Mediterranean Sea. It was once held by the Republic of Venice whilst the medieval Kingdom of Croatia governed inland. Over the centuries, this region went through many changes including being ruled by the Romans, the Hapsburgs, the Napoleonic Kingdom of Italy and the Austrian Empire. Formerly incorporated into Yugoslavia, today the majority of the peninsula is part of independent Croatia, with a small part providing Slovenia with its short coastline. The changes over many centuries and the colourful history, reflects in the regional food on offer, the architecture, and culture. This walking holiday offers a great opportunity to uncover the secrets of the Istrian peninsula and delve into influences of past times.

Cost from: \$2160 per person twin share Single room supplement from: \$395

Departs: 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th May; 2nd June; 22nd, 29th September; 6th, 13th October 2020

Tour includes: 7 nights in comfortable hotel room with ensuite bathrooms, 7 breakfasts, 7 dinners, experienced walks leaders offering a choice of two levels of guided walks on 5 days with one free day midweek, local transport to/from the walks.

Not Included: Meals and drinks not mentioned in the itinerary, personal expenses, transport or activities on your free day. Airport transfers from Pula Airport at set times are not included but they can be pre-booked at extra cost – we recommend you take these, please ask for details.

Footpath and walking information:



Easier Walks: 8 to 13km generally on good paths and tracks with some steep descents and rocky sections, with up to 360m of ascent in a day.



Harder Walks: 9 to 16km on steeper and rougher, sometimes rocky terrain, with up to 660m of ascent in a day.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations



Accommodation: The **Valamar Crystal Hotel**, a modern spacious hotel, enjoys a seafront location nestled amongst the trees, yet is only a short coastal stroll from bustling, historic Poreč, and provides a wonderful base to explore when we return from our walks. The hotel offers 223 spacious and bright en-suite rooms, a large terrace, bar and outdoor swimming pool

Suggested itinerary: *the final selection of walks each day will be made by your walking leaders*

Day 1: Arrival day

Transfers at set times from Pula Airport can be organised and pre-booked at an extra cost or make your way to the hotel at Poreč in time for dinner.

Day 2: Coast around Poreč

We start our walking adventure by exploring the Croatian coastline around Poreč to uncover the magic of the Adriatic Sea and its glistening waters. Follow the beautiful coast for introductory walks to this exciting and historic region of Croatia.

Day 3: Waterfalls And Hum

We follow a shaded trail through forests alongside the Mirna River which is Istria's longest, stretching 53 km long before spilling out into the Adriatic Sea. The Mirna River is quite a spectacular sight having carved out a canyon through the limestone rocks and created a series of waterfalls, which are especially impressive after spring and autumn rain.

Day 4: Grožnjan and Oprtalj

We explore the hills above the northern bank of the Mirna, the area dotted with several medieval towns all with different characteristics and linked by a 20th Century narrow gauge railway. We wander through a valley of terraced olive groves and vineyards which was formed by the action of two streams, the Kanistran and Pistion.

Grožnjan offers views of more than twenty surrounding Istrian villages, the valley of the river of Mirna and the sea from Novigrad to Umag. Originally built in 1102, the tiny hilltop village was a strategically important fortress for the 14th Century Venetians. They created a system of ramparts and gates, and built a loggia, a granary and several fine churches. With the collapse of the Venetian empire in the 18th Century, Grožnjan suffered a decline in its importance and population. Small closely built houses and the castle are a clear testimonial to its Medieval past and almost every doorway has a story to tell about the ancient times.

Day 5: Free day

Today spend the day at leisure, there are no walks organised. Perhaps spend the day exploring the historic old town of Poreč. Uncover the plethora of history including the world heritage site, the Euphrasian Basilica complex which is famous for its gem-studded Byzantine mosaics dating back to the 6th Century.

Day 6: Vineyards and Motovun

Motovun, which derives from the Celtic word meaning "town in the hills", is possibly the best known of Istria's hilltop medieval fortified towns. It lies near the steep verdant wooded valley with the town rising above. The dense, dark forest at the base of Motovun provides the perfect environment for Istria's famous hidden treasures – truffles. Within the town walls, discover an atmospheric cluster of Romanesque and Gothic buildings and houses, and an opportunity to taste the local wine of the region in one of the restaurants.

Day 7: Lake Butoniga

Surrounded by fertile hills and elevated communities, Lake Butoniga is a pristine body of water built in 1988 as the main water supply for the surrounding Istrian villages. The lake is fed by two main streams, Draguc and Ra i ki. We walk above the lake and enjoy spectacular views.

Day 8: Departure day

Tour arrangements end after breakfast. Airport transfers at set times to Pula are available at extra cost; please ask for details when booking.



Outdoor Travel offers guided or self-guided walks in most destinations within Europe, including the Dalmatian Coast in Croatia, in **Cinque Terre** and **Amalfi Coast** in Italy, **Provence** and the **French Riviera**, the **Cyclades Islands** in Greece and in many areas in the UK such as the popular **Coast to Coast** trail, the **Yorkshire Moors**, **Cotswolds**, **Scottish Highlands**, **Snowdonia** in Wales or the English **Lake District**. Pilgrimage walks are available on the **Camino de Santiago** from Le Puy to Santiago de Compostela in Spain, or the **Via Francigena**, the 'road to Rome'.

Contact Outdoor Travel for more details and reservations:

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