

MONTENEGRO: KOTOR BAY LAKE SKADAR & THE ADRIATIC COAST

8-days / 7-nights centre-based at Petrovac GUIDED walking tour

Two levels of walking each day



The tiny nation of Montenegro is one of the smallest and newest Balkan countries, gaining its independence in 2006. With its mountainous interior and superb Adriatic coastline it offers a range of walking options. The footpaths in the hills are seldom walked and are rich in natural beauty. On this holiday we explore beautiful Lov en National Park, pass through traditional villages and enjoy a boat ride on Lake Skadar, one of the largest lakes in Europe. It has 40 different kinds of fish and 270 bird species!

The dramatic Kotor Bay, on the Adriatic, is surrounded by the massifs of the Dinaric Alps and is lined with medieval and Venetian-era villages. Other highlights include the Blue Grotto, St Tryphon's Cathedral and Mount Orjen, providing a variety of activities and sightseeing possibilities over the course of your holiday.

Cost from: \$2050 per person (twin share) Single room supplement from \$410 (limited availability)

Departs: 18th, 25th April; 2nd, 9th, 16th May; 12th, 19th, 26th September; 3rd, 10th October, 2020

Tour includes: 7 nights in a comfortable hotel room with ensuite bathroom, 7 breakfasts, 7 evening meals, an experienced walks leader offering a choice of two levels of guided walks on 5 days, with a free day midweek, local transport to/from the walks

Not Included: Meals & drinks not mentioned in the itinerary, personal expenses, transport/excursions on your free day. Transfers from/to Dubrovnik airport can be pre-booked at extra cost – ask for details when booking.

Accommodation: The 4-star **Hotel Palas** is directly overlooking the beach and surrounded by olive and orange trees. There are two terraces for dining or taking refreshments outdoors and the hotel restaurant offers a high standard of local and international cuisine. The hotel features two swimming pools (indoor and outdoor), sauna and wellness centre. Comfortable ensuite bedrooms have air conditioning. A lovely promenade with souvenir shops and cafés stretches along the sweeping bay. Behind the village are the towering Pastrovici Mountains.

Footpath and walking information



Easier Walks: 5-11km generally on good paths and stony tracks. Up to 390m of ascent in a day.



Harder Walks: 8-16km on steeper and rougher terrain. Up to 690m of ascent in a day.

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Suggested itinerary: *The itinerary outlined below may be subject to change at the walking guide's discretion. A finalised itinerary will be available at the resort and your leader will brief you every night about next day's walks.*

Day 1: Arrival day. Arrive in Petrovac. Ask about transfer from Dubrovnik airport at set time at extra cost. This evening meet your leaders for a briefing and get to know your fellow guests over dinner.

Day 2: Monasteries and the coastal traverse. On the slopes of the mountains above the coastal highway are numerous small communities, Orthodox monasteries, highly decorated churches and small farms with summer grazing called katuns. These walks use panoramic paths near Petrovac and are a great introduction to the area.

Easier Walk: Walking from the hotel we pass the neighbouring picturesque Lovcen beach and ascend to historic Gradište monastery, perched on a rocky outcrop. After a pleasant shaded traverse, we descend to a café at Buljarica beach for lunch before returning along the coast to our hotel. Walking @ 6.5km with 210m of ascent.

Harder Walk: An undulating path through trees and flowers along the top of the coastal mountain range takes us to the tiny chapel at Ogradenica for lunch. A rocky descent follows across the flanks of the mountains to a welcoming café with wonderful coastal views to Sv Stefan, a perfect end to our first day. Walking @ 11km with 215m of ascent and 690m of descent.

Day 3: The Tivat Peninsula and the Bay of Kotor. The wooded Tivat Peninsula, culminating in Vrmac Hill, flanks the Bay of Kotor to the west. Among the trees lie the ruined 12th Century Slav settlement of Pasiglav and the bucolic 14th Century village of Gornja Lastva. Walks follow a delightful path along the wooded slopes of Vrmac and enjoy views of the bay, often referred to as Europe's southernmost fjord, although it is actually a ria. Across the bay, the medieval towns of Perast and Kotor offer a taste of a possible excursion on the free day.

Easier Walk: From Gornja Lastva we ascend through trees past the ruins of Pasiglav steadily to the Tivat ridge with excellent views of Croatia and Serbia. An extraordinary former military road zigzags steadily down to the shore of Kotor Bay with views of the old town hemmed in by mountains. Walking @ 11km with 390m of ascent.

Harder Walk: We ascend on a steep footpath to the Church of Sveti Vid with views to the Adriatic, Croatia and Serbia, before a long steady ascent brings us to the Tivat ridge summit for lunch with more superb views. We follow the ridge to join the Franz Josef Steig and descend the path taken by the easier group to a bayside café. Walking @ 14.5km with 600m of ascent.

Day 4: Cetinje and the Lov en National Park. Towering over the Bay of Kotor, dominating northwest Montenegro are the two summits of Lovcen, the out-of-bounds Stirovnik at 1749m and Jezerski Vrh, crowned with the Mausoleum of Petar II at 1657m (the target for our harder walk). Both walks finish at Krstac on the boundary of the national park and at the head of one of the most spectacular roads in Europe. Walks may be affected by early season snow in higher areas.

Easier Walk: After a visit to the former imperial capital of Cetinje we start walking at Ivanova Korita in Lovcen National Park. A former military road leads us past Alpine communities and descends with stunning views over the Bay of Kotor to a welcoming café at Krstac. Walking @ 9.5km with 210m of ascent and 540m of descent.

Harder Walk: From the Park Office at Ivanova Korite, we ascend through trees to the summit ridge viewpoint of Mt Lovcen. Montenegro takes its name (meaning Black Mountain in the ancient Venetian tongue) from the dark and thickly forested slopes of Mt Lovcen. Descending steadily on a rough track we re-join the easier group and descend to Kotor Bay and the hotel. Walking @ 11km with 480m of ascent and 720m of descent

Day 5: Free day. Each week there is a free day when no guided walks are offered. This is an ideal opportunity to relax around the hotel, walk independently or visit local places of interest. On your free day perhaps explore spectacular Kotor Bay and the charming old Venetian towns of Kotor and Perast.

Day 6: Loška and Stari Bar. Southeast of Petrovac towards Albania, the Rumija mountain range separates the Adriatic from Lake Skadar: a landscape where mosques sit beside Orthodox churches and hillside farmers scratch a living. We pass the sprawl of Bar, the terminal on the Adriatic for the railway from Podgorica, to start our walks near Loška.

Easier Walk: Our path undulates past prosperous farming communities before a steep track leading to a lovely lunch spot at Loška. Passing flower strewn meadows minor roads bring us back to the coach for transport to the fascinating ruins of Stari Bar. Walking @ 11km with 300m of ascent and 630m of descent.

Harder Walk: Starting far inland at the isolated Muslim community of Lunje we walk the first stage of the high level mountain path through myriad flowers to the summit of Loška to enjoy lunch with far reaching views to the Adriatic and Albania. Returning to Lunje we are taken to the old town of Bar for refreshments before continuing to the hotel. 8km with 660m of ascent.

Day 7: Rijeka Crnojevi a & Lake Skadar. Between Petrovac and Podgorica lies the National Park of Lake Skadar, a huge wildlife reserve shared between Montenegro and Albania. Surrounded on three sides by Montenegrin mountains, Skadar is one of the largest lakes in Europe with 40 different kinds of fish and 270 bird species. Both walks explore this beautiful area, then, weather permitting, we take a scenic boat ride across the lake back to Virpazar before returning to our hotel via coach.

Easier Walk: On this walk we explore almost deserted Poseljani down to the lake shore before following the river on a stony path passing waterfalls to re-join the coach for lunch at the historic old bridge café in Rijeka Crnojevica. We then take our scenic boat ride down the river and across Lake Skadar with sightings of numerous birds almost certainly including the rare Dalmatian pelican. Walking @ 5km with 120m of ascent.

Harder Walk: After a brief exploration of Poseljani we ascend steeply on a little walked packhorse route to a high open space for lunch, passing old farmsteads as we descend through trees to re-join the easier group. Our boat ride takes us to the lakeside community of Virpazar with all facilities prior to our return to the hotel. Walking @ 9.5km with 420m of ascent and 540m of descent.

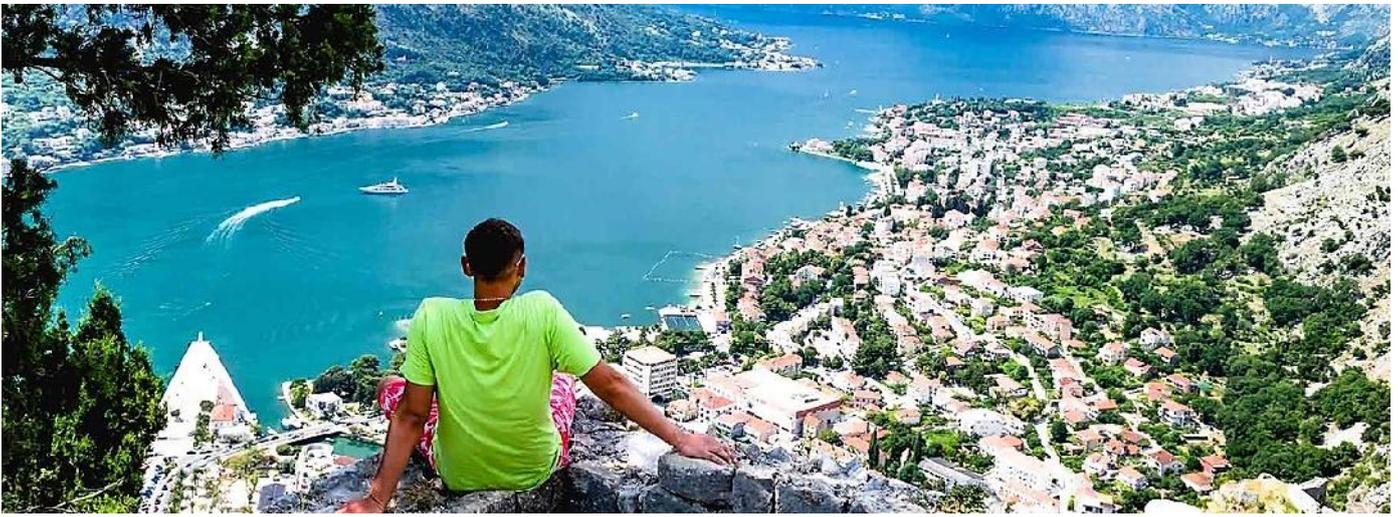
Day 8: Departure day. Tour ends after breakfast. Transfer at set time from Petrovac to Dubrovnik airport available at extra cost.



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- Call Toll free 1800 331 582 or (03) 57551743 or Fax (03) 57501020
- Email: info@outdoortravel.com.au
- Web: <http://www.outdoortravel.com.au>
- Mail: Outdoor Travel Pty Ltd, PO Box 286, Bright, VIC 3741, Australia



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