ITALY, CROATIA, SLOVENIA

Adriatic To Alps Cycle

ACTIVITY	ACCOMMODATION	CHALLENGE FACTORS	DURATION:	GRADE
Cycle	Hotel	Terrain	6 days	

This fantastic road cycling challenge takes us through three countries, from the Adriatic Coast to the Alps, via the beautiful blue gem that is Lake Bled, jewel of northern Slovenia. All in all, we cycle almost 700 undulating kilometres, with the Croatian hills providing the perfect warm-up to our main challenge – Vršić Pass (1611m), with its 50 hair-pin bends, the highest mountain road in Slovenia!

The Istria Peninsula in northern Croatia is relatively unknown, a hidden Tuscany-like gem of forested hills, vineyards, olive groves and medieval hilltop towns. Starting from Pula on the coast, we ride though these beautiful, tranquil landscapes, before our route takes us into the alpine valleys of the Julian Alps, where dramatic peaks, crystal-clear lakes – including the famous Lake Bled – and colourful Slovenian towns with cobbled streets round off this beautiful, varied week of riding.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Fly and transfer to Poreč

We fly into our cycling region, and transfer to Poreč, a picturesque town with well-preserved Roman buildings and mosaics, and the famous 6th- Century Euphrasian Basilica, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. After time to set up our bikes and ensure they're comfortable, we'll enjoy a warm-up ride as a taster to the beautiful Istrian countryside. Night hotel.

Cycle approx. 35-50 miles / 60-80km

There are various airport destinations suitable for this ride, including Pula (Croatia), Trieste (Italy), and Ljubljana (Slovenia), and we do not always use the same one. Group flight details will be confirmed nearer the time.

Day 2: Poreč – Umag

Today's route leads us inland, to the heart of Istria, on gentle gradients through thickly-forested regions known for their truffles. We pass pretty villages and historic towns, including the picture-perfect medieval hilltop town of Motovun, perched above the river Mirna. We cross the river, then climb for over 6km, twisting up through shady forest before emerging into far-reaching views at the top. A pretty tree-lined avenue leads us past olive groves to Oprtalj, a quiet village of colourful buildings and narrow streets. The hard part is over for the day, and it's now approx. 40km of descent through hills covered in rows of sun-warmed vines and olive trees, broken up by a few short climbs to keep our legs spinning! One of these brings us through Buje, another picturesque hilltop town with colourful terracotta-tiled roofs. Once out of the hills, we have a few flat miles along the coast to Umag, an attractive coastal town near the border with Slovenia. Night hotel.

Cycle approx. 75 miles / 120km (total ascent approx. 1424m)

Day 3: Umag – Muggia

Be prepared for huge variety today, as we clock up the miles across three countries! After an energising breakfast, we enjoy a few flattish miles, warming up on the coastal roads north of Umag, before heading up into Croatia's hilly Istrian interior one last time. We pass through the artist's town of Grožnjan, where the ancient, music-filled streets are lined with the studios and shops of local artists and craftspeople. Winding roads with some short, sharp climbs lead through yet more olive groves, with fantastic views over the surrounding landscapes, before reaching Momjan, a tiny village known for its vineyards. Then it's downhill, into Slovenia, and back to the coast on relatively flat roads. We take in Piran, its bell towers and marble piazzas echoing the better-known sights of Venice, and continue around the Adriatic coast into Italy, and the pastel-coloured port of Muggia. Night hotel.

Cycle approx. 70 miles / 112km (total ascent approx. 1143m)

Day 4: Muggia – Bovec

Another day of contrast, as we leave the beautiful Adriatic coast for the last time and head towards the peaks of the Julian Alps. A rolling start takes us through Trieste and across the border into Slovenia (again!) A fairly flat section brings us to Nova Gorica, a lovely town on the Italian-Slovenian border which prides itself on its meeting of cultures and histories. Following the beautiful deep-green Soča River through its gently-ascending, forested valley, the landscapes gradually become more alpine, and by the time we reach Tolmin, on the edge of Triglav National Park, we feel we're in the Alps; this area is known for its towering cliffs and river-gorge. The challenge ramps with the long, fairly-gradual mountain road that winds its way to Bovec. A small town surrounded by breath-taking views and rugged peaks including Mt Triglav. Bovec (434m) is the adventure capital of the Julian Alps, and a great place to stay for the night. Night hotel.

Cycle approx. 85 miles / 136km (total ascent approx. 1885m)

Day 5: Bovec – Bled

We start our day with the biggest climb of our week: the fabled 50 hair-pin bends of the Vršić Pass (1611m) – the

highest mountain road in Slovenia! Twenty-six hair-pins take us uphill from Bovec (the remaining twenty-four form the descent!) Our road leads us through the remote Trenta Valley; the gradient is fairly gentle at first, giving us plenty of time to warm up, as we ride under shady beech and larch trees. The road becomes steeper, with gradients generally between 8-10%, and the alpine forest gives way to more barren scree slopes near the pass. After time to soak up the magnificent views of surroundings peaks and valleys, we head down the northern side of the pass, passing the Russian chapel built for the Russian prisoners-of-war who built this road after WW1. An exhilarating descent bring us to Kranska Gorka and its wide green valley, and then to Lake Bled, one of the highlights of our route, and the entire Julian Alps range. Set in this clear, calm alpine lake is a small island topped with a white church; you'll be stopping to take frequent photos! As this is our last full day together, we'll enjoy a celebratory dinner in this famous lakeside town tonight. Night hotel.

Cycle approx. 57 miles / 94km (total ascent approx. 1642)

Day 6: Bled – Ljubljana; flight departs

This last section of our cycling route is a beautiful one. Climbing away from Lake Bled, we ride through the mountains towards Lake Bohinj, its quieter neighbour, set among steep hills and tall trees. Another climb takes us up on quiet roads through small hamlets and farms, before descending to the small village of Železniki, with its colourful streets of steep-roofed houses. Here we leave the hills, pedalling through more pretty villages including Škofja Loka, where the cobbled streets wind between colourful buildings and old stone bridges span the river. Depending on our flight's departure, we may have time to ride right into Slovenia's capital, or we may load up earlier, before transferring to the airport, and saying our farewells.

Cycle approx. 113km (total ascent approx. 1807m)

(Dinner not included)

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Return flights from UK to Pula/Ljubljana
- All transfers as part of itinerary
- All accommodation in hotels on twin-share basis
- All meals except where specified
- Discover Adventure crew (number dependent on group size)
- Local guide/mechanic and drivers
- Vehicle support and back-up equipment on the trip
- GPX files for each day to load onto your bike computer/navigation device (not included)
- **We offset 100% of the carbon emissions from your trip, including flights booked with us**

WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- Any meals specified 'not included' in the itinerary
- Bicycle - bring your own, or hire in-country; please contact the office for details
- If flying with your bike, any associated costs (bike box, sports luggage, etc)
- Cycle helmet (compulsory) and water bottle

- Travel insurance
- Personal spending money, souvenirs, and drinks
- Fees for any optional sites, attractions or activities
- Any applicable surcharges as per Terms and Conditions

GRADE | ORANGE

All our trips are designed to provide a challenge. Trips are graded Yellow, Orange or Red, in increasing level of challenge. This trip lies within the **ORANGE** range.

The grade is determined by factors such as terrain, distance, climate, altitude, etc. Each colour grade has a **spectrum** which reflects the difficulty of these factors. Trip duration, accommodation and living conditions are also taken into account. Some sections will feel more challenging than others, but the grade reflects the overall trip. Unusual weather conditions can also have a significant impact.

The Accommodation icon indicates the living conditions while trekking/cycling. While there are usually several factors that present a challenge, the Challenge icon indicates the trip's most challenging element, for most people.

Trip grading explained

CHALLENGE INFORMATION

DETAILED INFORMATION

Leaders & Trip Support

Your trip will be led by experienced crew. The in-country crew know the area and conditions well, and are a great source of knowledge about the regions we pass through. The crew work closely with the group to ensure your trip runs smoothly and safely. Crew are selected for their knowledge and experience, friendliness and approachability, sense of humour and ability to safely and effectively deal with any situation that arises; they are also trained in first aid. The crew will have mobile phones, medical kit and other safety apparatus where necessary. The number of crew and support vehicles looking after you will depend on the final size of your group, but the team will be looking after every aspect of your trip whether that's transporting your luggage, making sure you are well-fed, and sorting out any mechanical problems. Support vehicles are with the group for the whole trip.

Trip Safety

Your safety, and that of the rest of the group, is our highest priority. Our trips are designed and planned with safety in mind. Your crew will be equipped with appropriate communication devices (eg phones, radios), medical kit and other safety apparatus appropriate to the destination. Our leaders always have access to our 24-hour emergency UK back-up. They are responsible for safety on the trip, and will make any changes to the itinerary they deem necessary, should local

conditions dictate. Pre-trip administration - such as medical questionnaires and travel insurance as appropriate - is all done with your safety in mind.

Flight Information

Group flights usually leave from London Heathrow or Gatwick but may also depart from regional airports, and are booked through Discover Adventure Ltd under ATOL licence 5636. You will usually receive confirmed flight details several months before departure. We do not always use the same airline for each destination and low cost airlines may be used for short haul flights. If you wish to know the probable carrier and flight times, please call for details.

By travelling with Discover Adventure you are protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). Our itineraries are always based on current flight schedules and are therefore subject to change by the airline. If you prefer to book your own flights please ask us for a land-only cost.

Accommodation

Accommodation is usually in well-located, comfortable 2-3* hotel(s); standards are generally very good though there may be some variation.

Roomshare Arrangements

Our trips are sold on a shared accommodation basis, usually twin-share, in hotels convenient to our route.
You can tell us if you are travelling with someone else on the trip when you book or within your passenger portal, and we will do all we can to accommodate this request. It is important that both people complete the room share request on their bookings. For customers booking and travelling together, including same-sex couples, a double bed can be requested if available.
If you're not familiar with anyone in the group, rest assured, we always pair you with someone of the same gender (as per the information you provided when booking, or passport markers), and a similar age where possible. We're actively working to improve our system's gender restrictions to be more inclusive, and we've recently made significant strides in this area. If you identify differently from the gender marker on your passport and would like to discuss this before booking, please feel free to reach out to us.

Single Supplements

In most standard hotels, we can usually offer a limited number of single rooms. This is upon request, on a first-come, first-served basis, and additional charges apply. In more communal accommodation, single rooms are rarely an option. We do not charge a single supplement if you are a solo traveller in a shared room.

Food & Dietary Requirements

We like to support local businesses and will source food locally wherever we can. Lunches will be a mix of restaurants along the route or supplies will be purchased from local shops; dinners are usually eaten at the hotel. For larger sized groups we may opt to cater the lunches ourselves with a buffet style provision. Being vegetarian or having other dietary

requirements is not usually a problem provided you let us know well in advance. Having said that, despite working very hard with the hotels, it doesn't always translate into what we'd like for you. If this is the case on your trip, please chat to the crew at the time and they will do their best to find a solution. If you know there are plenty of foods you cannot eat you may wish to bring extra snacks from home so you can top up your energy supply.

PREPARING FOR THE CHALLENGE

Challenge Grading

GRADE | ORANGE

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Trip grading explained

Fitness Levels

This is designed to be a challenge, and it is vital that you train sufficiently for it. We will supply you with a thorough training guide once you have registered. We expect all participants to train hard in advance, but we respect everyone's limits and do not expect everyone to maintain the same pace. Inadequate training is likely to have an impact not just on your chances of completing the challenge, but enjoying it too - and we want you to have the time of your life!

Our challenges attract people of all levels of experience, fitness and ability as well as all ages and backgrounds. We design our challenges so that everyone can go at their own pace: this is not a race. If you have concerns about your fitness or if you have reduced mobility please do contact us for a confidential chat about whether this challenge is appropriate for you.

For logistical and safety reasons we sometimes need to re-group, so the front-runners may find themselves waiting for the slower ones. Please relax, and remember that this is a team effort that enables people to achieve their personal goals and earn sponsorship.

Terrain

The cycling terrain is very varied, ranging from coastal flat, to inland hills and rolling valleys, to alpine climbs and descents towards the end of the trip. The highest point reached is 1611m, which is not particularly high compared to mountain passes in other alpine regions, but it's a long climb - fitness and confident bike handling are key. The steepest gradients tend to be on short sharp climbs, rather than the longer mountain ascents. We ride mainly on small rural roads which are in generally good repair; road bikes are the most suitable on this trip. Traffic is light most of the time, but we recommend you are confident cycling in some traffic as we will pass through busier areas, especially on the coast.

Electric Bikes

On this particular challenge it is possible to upgrade to an electric bike, at additional cost.
In the last few years e-bikes have become increasingly popular. At Discover Adventure we see them as a great tool for inclusivity, and a great enabler for people to get out cycling – at home and on our trips – especially when continuing riding (or starting again) in older age or through health problems.
With charity challenges being at the heart of our business, we know that e-bikes are being used by beneficiaries of various charities to aid recovery, and that they enable participation in events raising funds for those charities.
E-bikes must, however, be used with caution on a multi-day, high-mileage trip and are in no way a substitute for training. Please talk to us well in advance if you are interested in using an e-bike on this challenge, so we can ensure you are aware of the pros and cons. There are a limited number available in-country, and we need plenty of advance notice (two to three months in many destinations) to be able to reserve one for the ride.

Clothing & Kit

We plan our trips around the optimal weather conditions, but could still be exposed to bad weather at any time. It is vital you are prepared for all conditions. We provide you with a detailed packing kit-list on registration, with plenty of information, and we are always available if you need advice.

Passport & Visa / Vaccinations

Entry requirements vary depending on your destination and nationality. It is your responsibility to ensure your passport is valid, and any visas are obtained in good time. Check the FCO's advice on entry requirements for your destination to be sure. Please ensure you allow plenty of time to apply for your visa; we will provide you will all necessary information 6 weeks prior to depature to assist with your application.

Your routine UK schedule of vaccinations should be up-to-date (especially tetanus). We recommend you check the NaTHNaC Travel Health Pro website for further details. You should always check with a GP or travel clinic for up-to-date travel health advice as it does change.

Foreign Travel Advice

For the latest travel advice from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office including security and local laws, plus passport and visa information, check www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice.

Travel Insurance

Travel Insurance is compulsory on all of our challenges outside of the UK; we strongly suggest that you arrange insurance cover as soon as your booking with us is confirmed, or as soon as you're able to purchase some, and at least 8 months prior to travel. Should you need to cancel prior to departure, you will need insurance to cover the costs involved (registration fee and any trip costs depending on cancellation date).

We all hope never to need it, and thankfully most of the time we don't, but on those rare occasions when you do, you want it to cover you as best it can. Whilst it's a fairly boring admin task relating to your trip of a lifetime, it is really important you ensure that you have adequate cover for the type of challenge you are taking part in as well as medical emergencies, evacuation and repatriation, so make sure you're happy with the level of cover. There are lots of suppliers out there, with a wide range in levels of cover; generally speaking, you get what you pay for! Get and pay for the right level of cover and then you can go on your adventure not having to worry about the what-if's. For more details click here.

Once your travel insurance is arranged, just remember to let us know the policy number and 24-hr medical emergency phone number provided by your insurers.

Cancelling your booking

In the unfortunate circumstance that you need to cancel your booking, we would ask that you notify us in writing either by email or post. Your cancellation will be considered effective from the date the notice is received. Registration, administration and amendment fees are non refundable and, depending on your payment option and how close it is to your challenge departure date, you may be liable for a cancellation charge.

Full details of all cancellation charges may be found in the Terms and Conditions of booking.

Group Size

Your booking is part of a group challenge, and the tour costs and fundraising targets listed on our website are based on a minimum number of participants which is shown on the challenge Our typical groups run with approximately 15-25 participants; however you may find your group is smaller or larger than this.

We will confirm at least 12 weeks prior to departure that your challenge is guaranteed to run. Occasionally it may be possible to still run the challenge with less than the minimum numbers, subject to a small group supplement. If we think a small group supplement may be necessary, we will discuss this with you as soon as possible, usually 5 months before your departure date.

Minimum numbers and groups sizes may vary on Bespoke Charity challenges. If you are booked onto a bespoke challenge please contact your charity for full details.

Passenger Portal

We have a Passenger Portal which will give you more details of the challenge itself. It also enables you to see any outstanding information we need, the countdown to your challenge departure, see your outstanding balance, make payments and update your contact details. You can access this via the following link - Passenger Portal Log in.

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Discover Adventure reserves the right to change the route or itinerary for safety reasons should local conditions dictate.

Please note: This document was downloaded on 13 Nov 2026, and the challenge is subject to change.