

Croatia's Coastal Paradise

Dalmatia, Croatia's coastal paradise, is world-famous for the beautiful towns that dot its coastline and the glorious islands just offshore. If you're looking for a destination that truly has a bit of everything; think pristine beaches, gorgeous architecture, rich history, Mediterranean cuisine, and more; then Dalmatia is right for you. Our bike tour starts in Split, Dalmatia's unofficial capital, and ends in Dubrovnik, the region's most popular tourist attraction. Both Split and Dubrovnik have international airports making for easy arrivals and departures. Over ten days we work our way south. Short ferry rides take us from island to island. We take our time, not changing hotels every day. The island cycling is spectacular, with quiet, scenic roads. As you climb the hills you will be treated to sweeping sea views with multiple islands and islets rising from the calm azure waters. In the background will be the Dinaric Alps, separating the Baltics from the Adriatic Sea. Mixed with the cycling will be numerous cultural activities. We will visit a local market to buy produce and fish for a hands-on cooking class. From the deck of an oyster boat you will try fresh oysters and mussels. You will see how olive oil is produced and learn about the local wines during a wine tasting. You will meet friendly Croatians who will teach you about their unique cuisine and culture. Dalmatia has so much to offer.

Route Rating

Moderate: 6-28 miles
(10-46 km) per day over hilly terrain.

Meet / Finish

Split / Dubrovnik

Highlights

- Old towns of Split, Hvar, Korcula, and Dubrovnik
- Seaside hotels
- Hands-on cooking class
- Oyster boat excursion and tasting
- Charter boat day tour
- Olive oil mill visit
- Wine tasting
- Diocletian's Palace visit
- Beautiful coastal scenery
- Island cycling

Other Questions?

Toll free 1 888 421 2418
info@charnestours.com





Day 1 **Split**

You check into our hotel on and explore the historic center of Split. Diocletian's Palace is the biggest attraction in town, and it is just a seven-minute walk from the hotel. This palace was constructed at the end of the third century AD as a residence for the Roman emperor Diocletian. This sprawling Palace is one of the most imposing ancient Roman structures in existence today. Passing through one of its original gates, you will find ten-acres of temples, bustling piazzas, swanky cafes, modern boutiques, and an ancient cathedral, all connected by cobbled pedestrian alleyways. In the late afternoon we rendezvous in the hotel for a welcome drink before heading to a restaurant for a group dinner.

Day 2 **Split**

We meet a professional Croatian chef who takes us to the local produce and fish markets. While we snap photos of colorful fruits and veg, he chooses the necessary ingredients for our hands-on cooking class. We stop at the ancient fish market where the day's catch is spread on old marble tables and the receipts are still written by hand. For lunch we will be preparing traditional dishes based on fish, crustaceans, local vegetables, fruits and spices. Feel free to work on any dish and ask any questions. If you prefer to sip wine and socialize, that is fine as well. Our delicious lunch is followed by a warm-up ride in Marjan Park. This park is a car-free, green oasis with sea views, a sandy beach, and a panoramic café. We stop for cold beverages at the scenic café before returning to our hotel.

Hotel

Heritage Hotel Fermai

Split, Spain

(3 nights)

Located on the edge of the historic center of Split, the 4-star Heritage Hotel Fermai is set in an Art Nouveau building and offers modern-style accommodations.

www.hotelfermai.com

The Ride

Day 2, 6 miles (10 km)

Our warm-up ride takes us through a large car-free, public park. The ride has 328 ft of climbing (100 mt).

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Day 3 **Split**

Brac Loop Ride

*18 miles (30 km)
1,509 ft (480 mt) climb*

On Day 3 we take a one-hour ferry to the island of Brac. A short coastal ride leads us to Skrip, the oldest town on the island. In Skrip we visit the Olive Oil Museum where the Krstulović family has been making olive oil since 1864. The family has restored their ancient mill and explain step by step the traditional oil making process. The museum is a member of Culinary Heritage Europe, an organization dedicated to the preservation and promotion of culinary culture. What does that mean for us? It means a tasty lunch of local products including olive paté, fig jam, Brac cheese, bread, wine, and dalmatian smoked prosciutto. After lunch we cycle downhill to Splitska, a miniscule coastal village with a beautiful sea front and an inviting stone beach. Bring your swimsuit for a swim in the smooth clear waters. We return to Split by ferry.

The Ride

Day 3, 18 miles (30 km)
We ride along a rolling coast with sea views. The day includes a 5 km climb to our lunch spot.

Skrip Olive Oil Museum

We tour an ancient olive mill and learn how oil was produced for centuries on this small island. After the tour we have a farm to table lunch with local staples.



Day 4 **Hvar Town**

Stari Grad to Hvar Town

28 miles (46 km)
2,264 ft (690 mt) climb

Our day begins with a 2-hour ferry from Split to Hvar. The sea is almost always calm, the ferry seats are cushy, and there is a café on the ship, making for a relaxing transfer. Cycling from the port we cross the plains of Hvar before arriving in Jelsa, a gorgeous seaside village with a scenic harbor. We bike along the harbor and head down a spectacular coastal road to a little village called Vrboska. Here we find ancient limestone houses lining a curvy bay. We stop at a wine bar for a wine tasting and light lunch. In the afternoon we have a big climb followed by a long scenic descent to our hotel in Hvar town. This ancient town is a true Mediterranean gem full of Venetian architecture, charming cobblestone streets, and fantastic restaurants.

Day 5 **Hvar Town**

Boat Excursion

We take a break from cycling today and enjoy a six-hour boat excursion. We cruise from island to island visiting remote caves, grottos, and beaches. Masks, snorkels, and floaties are available to help you explore the various sites. We stop for lunch on the island of Vis. After WWII Vis became one of Yugoslavia's main naval bases. During this time a secret submarine base was dug into the rocky shore. We visit this submarine base where you can swim or just walk around this amazing relic of the Cold War.

Hotel

Amfora Hvar Grand Beach Resort

Hvar, Croatia
(2 nights)

This luxury hotel is located above a public beach and features multi-level pools. Sea views are the highlight here and Hvar's center is just a 10-minute walk away.

www.suncanihvar.com/amfora

The Ride

Day 4, 28 miles (546 km)
A very scenic ride with a big afternoon climb, 1,300 ft (400 mt) in 12 km.

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Day 6

Korcula Old Town

Korcula to Racisce

16 miles (26 km)

1,017 ft (310 mt) climb

A fast catamaran takes you and your bikes to Korcula in 1 hr and 10 min. The van can't join you on the catamaran and has to take a longer route. Korcula old town feels a lot like Dubrovnik, but without the crowds. The town oozes with old world charm. The town sits on a little peninsula with water on three sides. Behind its 14th century walls is a village of ancient limestone buildings. Wandering its pedestrian laneways you will find seaside restaurants, trendy cafes, and charming shops. Your bike ride follows the rugged coastline to Racisce, a small picturesque port spread around a broad bay. Have lunch at an outdoor restaurant before backtracking to Korcula.

Day 7

Korcula Old Town

Korcula to Lumbarda

10 miles (17 km)

722 ft (220 mt) climb

Today we ride to Lumbarda, the wine making area of the island. The ride is short with just one big climb. We visit a winery where we learn about Croatia's indigenous grape with a vowelless name, known as grk. We sample four wines while the winemakers explain the unique characteristics of their local varieties. The wine tasting is paired with prosciutto, local cheeses, olive oil and bread. After the winery it is a short ride to a long sandy beach where you can swim or snack. We will be back in Korcula old town in the early afternoon, leaving you plenty of time to explore.

Hotel

The Fabris Luxury Inn
Korcula, Croatia
(2 nights)

The Fabris is a boutique inn located on the waterfront in Korcula's old town. The position couldn't be better. Rooms are modern and comfortable.
www.thefabris.com

The Rides

Day 6, 16 miles (26 km)

An out and back coastal ride with little traffic. The ride is lumpy, but doesn't have any long climbs or steep grades.

Day 7, 10 miles (17 km)

A short ride with limited climbing. We ride on backroads, a bike path, and later on the main road.

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Day 8 **Zuljana**

Korcula Old Town to Zuljana

*21 miles (34 km)
2,001 ft (610 mt) climb*

Our day begins with a 15-minute ferry ride back to the mainland. A long gradual climb with sea views takes us up and over the Sveti Ilija Mountains. After this long climb comes an even longer descent. We cycle through open countryside before arriving in Trstenik, a small fishing village set tight amongst the hills of the Pelješac peninsula. This is one of the most famous winemaking areas in Croatia where they grow the country's most beloved red grape, Plavac Mali. We have lunch at a seaside restaurant. From our outdoor tables we have views of fishing boats gently bobbing in the quiet bay. After lunch we have an 8-km ride along a spectacular coastline. The quiet road cuts through vineyards that slope gently down to the blue sea. Our destination is Zuljana, a gem of a beach town on a turquoise bay, surrounded by green hills. Zuljana is far away from the hustle and bustle of the city. At night you can hear the sound of the sea, buzzing cicadas, and jackals howling in the dark. There are no hotels here, so our accommodations are comfortable rental apartments. Our night in Zuljana will be different and special.

Apartments

Leko Apartments

Zuljana, Croatia

(1 night)

The Leko Apartments are 5-minute walk from Zuljana Beach. Each apartment has strong A/C, a patio and WIFI.

www.apartments-leko-20247.dubrovnik-neretva-hotels.com/en/

The Ride

Day 8, 21 miles (34 km)

Leaving the ferry we climb 1,300 ft (400 mt) in 12 km. We then descend 14 km back to the sea. The last 8 km are flat.

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Day 9 **Dubrovnik**

Zuljana to Mali Ston

17 miles (28 km)

1,148 ft (350 mt) climb

An undulating ride takes us down a valley framed by gentle mountains. Our ride ends with a long descent into the town of Mali Ston. Here you will find Europe's oldest salt pans, dating from the 10th century. The town also has Europe's longest fortified walls, built in the 14th century to protect the valuable salt. Last but not least, there is a pristine bay, the largest oyster producing area in the Adriatic. We have lunch before joining Captain Mario on his 50-year-old wooden oyster boat. We chug out into his corner of the bay where dozens of buoys hide ropes chock a block with the European flat oyster, one of the best in the world. Captain Mario pulls oysters from the sea, shucks them, and serves them with lemon and wine. He fires up a camping stove and prepares fresh mussels. You won't find fresher mollusks than these. Our afternoon ends with a private one-hour shuttle to Dubrovnik where our hotel rooms have balconies with striking sea views. Group dinner at the hotel.

Day 10 **Dubrovnik**

Departure Day

The bike tour ends after a buffet breakfast at our Dubrovnik hotel. We haven't organized a group visit to the Old City of Dubrovnik, Croatia's most popular tourist destination. You will want to organize this visit on your own. You can stay two nights at the Hotel Adria or move to different accommodations. The Old City is 2 km from the hotel Adria. The Old City is full of tourists, but well worth a visit.

Hotel

Hotel Adria

Dubrovnik, Croatia

(1 night)

Hotel Adria is located 1.7 mi (1.7 km) away from Dubrovnik's Old Town.

Rooms have balconies with beautiful views of the Elafiti Islands and Lapad Bay.

www.hotel-adria-dubrovnik.com/

The Ride

Day 9, 17 miles (28 km)

A gradual climb followed by a steep descent. The ride is on quiet back roads with sweeping views.

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