



Slovenia: Villages, Castles, Vineyards, Scenic Valleys and the Julian Alps 2024

29 AUG – 15 SEP 2024

Code: 22424

Tour Leaders **Dr Adrian Jones, OAM, Martin Muhek**

Physical Ratings 

Explore extraordinarily diverse Slovenia with its glorious landscapes, snow-capped peaks, ancient forests, charming villages and rich artistic traditions. Enjoy fine wines and innovative cuisine.

Overview

Assoc. Professor Dr Adrian Jones, OAM leads this tour of little-known, extraordinarily diverse Slovenia. Adrian will be accompanied by Martin Muhek, who brings a profound knowledge of the Balkan region to ASA tours. Travel with them to this beautiful country in September, when the days are still long and warm and the autumn colours are beginning to appear.

- Travel through Slovenia's stunning natural landscapes including the soaring peaks of the Julian Alps and the subterranean magic of Postojna caves and UNESCO World Heritage-listed Skocjan caves.
- Dine in innovative restaurants including: the elegant [Hiša Linhart](#), avant-garde [Landerik](#), the gastronomic [Otocec Castle](#) and [Dubravkin put](#) in Zagreb.
- Enjoy the panorama from medieval Ljubljana Castle and explore the city's prehistoric and Roman past on a curator-led tour of the City Museum.
- Study the work of Joze Plecnik, Slovenia's renowned pioneer of modern architecture; view the National and University Library, the Central Market, Krizanke Summer Theatre and the picturesque Ljubljanica river, spanned by the Triple Bridge and Cobbler's Bridge.
- Explore Skofja Loka, with its fairytale castle and 14th-century Capuchin Bridge, and one of Slovenia's best-preserved medieval city centres.
- Enjoy Slovenia's pristine lakes: Lake Bled has a tiny Baroque chapel on a picturesque island and a castle looming above; at Lake Bohinj, ascend Mount Vogel by cable car for spectacular views of the Julian Alps.
- Visit Kobarid, immortalised in Ernest Hemingway's great novel *A Farewell to Arms*; and follow part of the historic trail along the emerald-green waters of the Soca river to view the Kozjak waterfall.
- Explore the wine towns of the Vipava Valley, and visit Maribor, the Styrian capital of Eastern Slovenia, which boasts the oldest grapevine in the world.
- Explore Ptuj, Slovenia's oldest town, featuring ornate monasteries and a hilltop castle.
- Visit the medieval fortress of Celje, built in the 13th century and transformed by the Counts of Celje, the greatest local rivals of the Habsburgs.
- Spend 2 nights in the pretty port town of Piran, one of the best-preserved historical centres on the Adriatic coast, encircled by 7th-century walls and rich in Venetian architecture.
- At Lipica Stud Farm view the training of famous Lipizzaner Horses who practice complicated paces, pirouetting and dancing to Viennese waltzes.

Overnight Ljubljana (4 nights) • Bled (3 nights) • Kobarid (1 night) • Piran (2 nights) • Postojna (1 night) • Celje (3 nights) • Zagreb (3 nights)

Introduction

This fertile, 'foodie' and oft-forgotten region fascinates. This is a land of plenty. Nowadays, the good life also has a young and creative bent here. Cultures and traditions have always fused in these border wonderlands; here they do not constrict as much as in heartlands. Blithe Slovenia, on the one hand, links cultures and geographies: Slav and Magyar, Germanic and Italian. Earnest Croatia, on the other hand, is a bulwark in the Balkans against the Balkans. In the consonant-rich Slovene language, these intersections are known as *sticisce*. Well-worn mountain passes and old Roman roads traverse these hinterlands: alpine and agricultural, forest and fluvial. The produce here is as fresh as the air, and as varied as the soils, the sympathies and the seasons. Here, where the Julian Alps untangle, you also reach the Pannonian far end of the eternal Eurasian plain.

Where are the crowds? Where's the hubris? As the westernmost outposts of Slavic people in Europe, Slovenia and Croatia are also simply superb and unpretentious places to visit: verdant, lively, stylish,

youthful and optimistic. Just three decades ago, the hinterland valleys, cultures and towns of Slovenia and Croatia coughed up Communism and dispensed with Yugoslavia; Slovenia with ease, Croatia amid pain. Communism and Yugoslav-dom were two (different) make-believes which Croats and Slovenes seldom abided – especially whenever it became clear that these fancies only served Serbs in Belgrade. Hinterland Croatia (so different from Dalmatia) and Slovenia are *sticisce*. No single culture dominates. Here all meet and all should thrive, albeit with troubling exceptions in the fifteenth and twentieth centuries. Croatia and Slovenia widen your wonder and renew your optimism. Take some roads less travelled.

Leaders



Dr Adrian Jones, OAM

A retired Associate Professor of History, and a frequent contributor to ABC local radio, Adrian is a Harvard graduate and expert in Greek and Russian, Ottoman and Balkan history: ancient, medieval, modern. He leads ASA tours of the Balkans, especially both Macedonia and Albania, Romania, Istanbul and Slovenia-Croatia. Adrian loves to connect the Ancient to the Modern, and he loves to compare Europe's East to Europe's West.

Recently retired, Dr Adrian Jones, OAM was Associate Professor of European History at La Trobe University. Adrian loves to combine travel, cuisine and history, which he also reprises on segments on ABC local radio and on ABC Radio National. He enjoys the challenges of connecting epochs, cultures, languages and places. He graduated with a BA from the University of Melbourne, an MA from La Trobe University and an MA and PhD from Harvard University, eventually specialising in Russian, Turkish, French and Balkan history. His publications include a scholarly monograph, *Late-Imperial Russia: An Interpretation* (1997) and a local history, *Follow the Gleam* (2000), which won the prize for the best book on Victorian history in 2001. Adrian has published scholarly articles on the philosophy of history, historiography, educational theory, comparative revolutions, and French, Balkan, Russian and Turkish social and intellectual history. Adrian is currently finishing one book about Mustafa Kemal and the ANZACs and starting another on Russian-Romanian-Ottoman relations in the early-eighteenth-century: the era of "Tulip Age" Sultan, Ahmet III, of a Moldavian prince, Dimitrie Cantemir, who should be famous, and of the greatest of the Russian Tsars, Peter the Great. A foundation Director of the [Australian] *National Centre for History Education* and a former Chair of *The History Council of Victoria*, Adrian was awarded a national Teaching Council award in 2008, and an *Order of Australia Medal* in 2009 for his teaching and professional activities. Adrian currently leads ASA tours to Russia, to Romania, along the Via Egnatia in Macedonia (Greek and Slav) through Albania to Corfu, an in-depth program to Istanbul, and to Slovenia-and-inland Croatia.

Travel Tuesdays: Explore the World Virtually
Beautiful and Beguiling Romania.
https://youtu.be/Z09LFgKo_OU



Martin Muhek

With a postgraduate degree in Ancient Greek and Latin from the University of Zagreb, Martin has a profound knowledge of the Balkan region. He has led ASA's tour of

Croatia since 2007.

Martin holds a postgraduate degree in Ancient Greek and Latin from the University of Zagreb. He is an accomplished linguist – as well as Croatian, he speaks English, French, Hungarian, Italian, Greek and Turkish. He translated *History of the Czech Republic* from Czech into Croatian, has translated numerous articles from German into Croatian, and a long-term project is a Croatian-Modern Greek dictionary. Martin has a deep, broad knowledge of the history of the Balkan region, from antiquity to the present day, as well as Central and Mediterranean Europe. He has been leading groups around Slovenia, Croatia and other parts of Europe for more than 15 years including ASA's program *An Adriatic Journey: from Trieste to Dubrovnik* since 2007; and with Dr Adrian Jones, leads our new tour to Slovenia.

Combine this tour with

An Adriatic Journey: from Trieste to Dubrovnik 2024

15 SEP – 30 SEP 2024

The Turquoise Coast: Southern Turkey & Rhodes 2024

16 SEP – 3 OCT 2024

Along the Via Egnatia: Macedonia, Albania and Corfu 2024

21 SEP – 8 OCT 2024

Parma: History, Gastronomy and Verdi 2024

22 SEP – 2 OCT 2024



Itinerary

This itinerary provides an outline of the proposed daily program. The daily activities described in this itinerary may be rotated and/or modified in order to accommodate changes in museum opening hours, flight schedules etc. The tour includes breakfast daily, lunches and dinners indicated in the detailed itinerary where: B=breakfast, L=lunch and D=dinner.

Ljubljana - 4 nights

Day 1: Thursday 29 August, Arrive Ljubljana

- Tour commences at 4.00pm in the foyer of the uHotel
- Welcome Meeting
- Orientation Walk
- Welcome Dinner at [Georgie Bistro](#)

Meeting Point: The tour commences at 4.00pm in the foyer of the [Eurostars uHotel](#) located in the heart of Slovenia's capital, Ljubljana.

We commence the tour with a short Welcome Meeting which will be followed by an orientation stroll through the city, along the Ljubljanica river, passing the triple bridge. Over the next four days, we return to other places in and around these districts, some introducing us to two millennia of art and history in this charming city, and others to the *Jugendstil* (Art Nouveau) world of Joze Plecnik, Ljubljana's famous architect, who lived near our hotel.

In the evening we enjoy a Welcome Diner at Georgie Bistro located not far from the hotel. Georgie Bistro is a premier culinary hotspot that offers a delightful and inventive dining experience, all within a warm and inviting ambiance. Under the leadership of esteemed chef Gregor Jelnikar, the talented team is dedicated to crafting exceptional and diverse dishes that draw inspiration from various global cuisines. (Overnight Ljubljana)

Day 2: Friday 30 August, Ljubljana

- Ljubljana Castle
- Museum of Modern Art (*Moderna galerija*) (Optional visit) or Afternoon at leisure
- Dinner at Landerik

We shall explore the history and culture, old and new, of this beautiful, lively small city district by district. We begin today with an exploration of the Central Market in Vodnik Square, adjacent to the Dragon bridge. We then take the cable car up to Ljubljana Castle, the heart of historic Slovenia. The castle was beloved by the 17th-century Johann Weickhard von Valvasor, a Habsburg Baron (*Freiherr*) and Enlightenment-era intellectual, whose interests and imagination we encounter in many sites in Slovenia. Using an audio guide, you can explore the museums in this castle at your own pace. The panoramic views of the city also introduce us to the distinct culture of Valvasor's cherished Slovene borderland where ancient Roman, and old and current Slav, Italian (Veneto) and German (Habsburg) cultures blend. You will have lunchtime at leisure when you may wish to visit the market square below, or the castle courtyard above.

This afternoon is at leisure. You may decide to visit the Museum of Modern Art (*Moderna Galerija*), explore Ljubljana by yourself, or perhaps relax in our hotel. The Modern Art Museum charts the growing interaction of Western and Slovene art in the 19th and 20th centuries, as well as the unfurling and unravelling of artistic expression under Communism. We reconvene tonight for a delicious meal at Landerik, a new concept restaurant in the heart of Ljubljana, offering avant-garde and locally sourced cuisine. (Overnight Ljubljana) BD

Day 3: Saturday 31 August, Ljubljana

- Prehistoric and Roman Ljubljana: guided tour of the City Museum (*Mestni Muzej*) with a Curator
- Walking tour of Roman sites in the city centre, with an expert guide from the Museum
- Lunch in the Balkan café courtyard in the Križanke neighbourhood: Gostilna Plecnikov Hram na Krizanke
- Joze Plecnik's Ljubljana: Architectural tour of the city centre, including a visit to Plecnik's house
- National and University Library, designed by Joze Plecnik, including the renowned Reading Room

Today we remain close to our base, but journey back in time. With the older Aquileian castle looming high above, our tour centres around the lower river flat Ljubljana neighbourhood of the *Križanke*, an ancient church (1268) and hall (1228) complex once associated with German-speaking Spanheim-family Dukes of Carinthia (1144-1269). The last Duke, Ulrich III (c. 1220-1269), tried to deter the Romance-speaking elected clerical Lords of Aquileia (Venezia-Giulia), by summoning the Order of Teutonic Knights to help him rule this Slav-speaking region ("the Windic march"). As in Transylvania, these footloose knights over-stayed their welcome, heading to the east Baltic. The Habsburgs eventually took over Ljubljana in 1335. Each section of the *Križanke* we see today, was later rebuilt, however, either in 1561 or 1715. Modified by the great Joze Plecnik, the *Križanke* now acts as an Arts and Museums hub, and as a key summer venue of the Ljubljana Festival.

At the City Museum of Ljubljana (*Mestni Muzej*), we explore Slovenia's prehistory. One of its most fascinating exhibits is a decorated wooden wheel which is about 5200 years old; it is thought to be the oldest wooden wheel ever found. It dates to the pile-dwelling period, when people dwelt in villages of stilt-houses (*Ljubljansko Barje*, 3000-1000 BC). We also discover Ljubljana's Roman past: the town of Emona (*Colonia Iulia Emona*) was built on the site of the prehistoric settlement in the early 1st century AD, by Augustus' troops. The location of the city was of strategic importance, being at a crossroads of important trade routes; at the time the Romans were conquering new lands in the Balkan south and the Pannonian

east.

We lunch nearby, in simple Balkan style, in the Križanke courtyard.

This afternoon we turn our focus to the extraordinary architectural heritage of the 20th-century Art Nouveau architect Joze Plecnik (1872-1957). Plecnik's influence on the architectural landscape of Ljubljana has been compared to that of Gaudí upon Barcelona. With a local expert, we tour his key city buildings and visit his charming house, which has been preserved as it was in his lifetime. It holds sketches, plans, models, and photographs relating to Plecnik's famous creations such as the National and University Library, the Ljubljana Central Market and the Church of St Michael in the Marshes.

We finish the afternoon with a visit to the National and University Library, including Plecnik's grand Reading Room. (Overnight Ljubljana) BL

Day 4: Sunday 1 September, Ljubljana

- National Museum of Slovenia
- National Gallery of Slovenia

Today we explore the fascinating prehistory, migration history and flora and fauna of this beautiful, varied and fertile country at the National Museum of Slovenia (*Narodni Muzej Slovenij*). A curator of Archaeology will discuss its highlights. These include a 1995 find in the submerged Divje Babe cave near Cerklje ob Noč. We also encounter a Neanderthal bone flute (60,000 to 50,000 BC) fashioned from the femur of a cave bear, an oak dug-out canoe (9th century BC) discovered in 1927, and Iron Age armour from Slovene sites at Stična, Vir and Gradisce. We glimpse Slovenia's migration history in displays of sites resembling King Arthur's *Tintagel* at Ajdovski Gradec (5th to 6th century AD) and in displays revealing the Slav migrations.

A light lunch follows, at Gostilna Sestica, a classic Slovene restaurant serving traditional dishes.

In the afternoon, we visit the National Gallery of Slovenia, to contrast the liveliness of the master painters and wood carvers active in 15th-century Slovenia with the Byzantine-like austere piety of their medieval predecessors. In other halls, traversing the 16th and 17th centuries, the Habsburg Baroque emerges with all its emotion and exuberance. We also encounter the influence of Habsburg Flemish genre painting, for example, in the work of the Dutch artist Almanach, who worked in Slovenia in the 17th century. Other halls explore bourgeois life in prosperous 19th century Slovenia, culminating in a delightful series of works by local impressionists. We encounter the work of artists such as realist Ivana Kobilca, the most prominent Slovenian painter and a key figure in Slovenian cultural identity. Allow her *Kofetarica* (*Coffee Drinker*) of 1888 to prompt you to repose in the gallery café! (Overnight Ljubljana) BL

Bled - 3 nights

Day 5: Monday 2 September, Ljubljana – Pustal – Skofja Loka – Crngrob – Bled

- Devil's Bridge, Pustal
- Skofja Loka Castle & Museum
- Church of Annunciation, Crngrob
- Bled Castle

We begin our journey through what is arguably Eastern Europe's loveliest country. Leaving Ljubljana, we drive northwest by private coach towards the grand Julian Alps, meandering along the basin of the River

Sava. We'll meet the Sava again at our tour's end in Zagreb in Croatia; it continues to join the Danube at Belgrade.

Today, we stop in the picturesque little village of Puštal, on the Sora River, a tributary of the Sava. Our local guide will meet the coach and take us across the famed 'Devil's Bridge', which spans the river. This wooden footbridge is named after supposed ancient appearances of the devil. Across the river is the enchanting medieval town of Skofja Loka. The town's first written records date to 1248. In the 13th century it was a bustling market town of craftspeople and traders, who were organised into various guilds. Skofja Loka and the surrounding estates were an Imperial fief known as 'the Bishop of Freising's Meadow'. From 973, they remained in the possession of the Bavarian Bishops of Freising for more than 900 years. The original city plan survives: an upper square, the *Plac*, is separated from a lower square, the *Lontrg*; narrow streets cross the town centre, and a bold castle (rebuilt in the 16th century) stands atop a nearby hill. With our guide, we walk through the town up to the Loski Musej (Loski Museum), housed in the castle. One of the best-arranged museums in Slovenia, it houses archeological, historical, cultural, artistic, natural science and ethnological collections. We also have the opportunity to view a very well-preserved 16th century farmhouse, Škopar's House (*Škoparjeva hiša*), in the castle garden.

After a simple lunch in the town centre, we shall take a short walk to Skofja Loka's Capuchin Bridge (Stone Bridge). Built in the mid-14th century from carved stone in a semi-circular shape, it is the only one of its kind in central Europe. At its centre is a statue of the Bohemian saint, St. John of Nepomuk (1345-1393), with the Škofja Loka coat-of-arms on its plinth; in its medieval days the Selca Gate, with a guard tower, stood beside it. It was renovated and equipped with railings in the late 19th century. From here, our guide accompanies us on our coach to the Church of the Annunciation to the Holy Virgin (*Marijino Oznanenje*) at Crngrob. Founded in the 13th century, this lovely church holds some of the finest frescoes in Slovenia. These detail the *Life of the Virgin* (late-13th to early-14th centuries) whilst Giotto-like (Slovene *Goriška* style) paintings portray the *Passion of Christ* (late 14th to mid-15th centuries).

We continue by coach to Bled, where we visit Bled castle (*Blejski Grad*), and thence opt to walk or to bus downhill to check into the Rikli Balance Hotel. Bled is a splendid resort town on a stunningly picturesque lake. Lake Bled comes complete with a medieval church on an island, overlooked by the castle high on an outcrop. While Bled Castle was an 11th-century fief of the Bishops of Blixen, the town of Bled only came into its own in the 19th-century as a bourgeois retreat. Naturopaths, like Dr Arnold Rikli (1823-1906), encouraged genteel promenading or venturesome hiking and climbing in fresh-air alpine destinations. Bled was also a favourite destination for Josip Broz Tito (1892-1980), the Croatian leader of Communist Yugoslavia (1944-80). (Overnight Bled) BL

Day 6: Tuesday 3 September, Lake Bohinj and Lake Bled

- Pletna cruise to Blejski Otok island and visit to the Church of the Mother of God on the Lake, Lake Bled
- Cable Car to Mount Vogel, Lake Bohinj
- Panoramic Boat along Lake Bohinj from Ukanc to Ribcev Laz, Lake Bohinj
- Dinner at Hiša Linhart

Today we immerse ourselves in some of Slovenia's most breathtaking landscapes. What could be better than to be rowed in a covered pletna boat to the island (*Blejski Otok*) in the middle of Lake Bled? Once a pagan site, it was re-invented in a national epic poem about the ancient loss of Slovene independence (*Krst pri Savici* or *Baptism on the Savica*, 1836) written by Slovenia's first national poet, France Prešeren (1800-49). In the Middle Ages Blejski Otok attracted Christian pilgrims to its little Assumption Church. This is a favoured place in Slovenia to wed, provided you carry your betrothed up each and every one of its 99

steps!

After returning to shore, we drive further into the sublime limestone range of the Julian Alps (*Julijske Alpe; Prialpe Giulii*), moving somewhat closer to Friulian Udine in Italy than to Kärnten (Carinthia Province) in Austria. We take a cable car from Lake Bohinj to high Mt Vogel (1846m), where a breathtaking panoramic vista of the entire Triglav National Park beckons, capped by Mt Triglav (2864m) across the lake and to the north. After free time for lunch in a panorama restaurant, we descend by cable car and cruise along Lake Bohinj from Ukanc to Ribcev Laz. Here, we cross a bridge to visit the Romanesque/Gothic Church of St John the Baptist (*Cerkev sv. Janeza Krstnika*).

In the evening, we drive to Radovljica and dine well in another country restaurant: chef Uroš Štefelin's Hiša Linhart, then return to Bled. (Overnight Bled) BD

Day 7: Wednesday 4 September, Bled – Trzic – Kropa – Radovljica – Bled

- Trzic Museum: Cobblery exhibition in the former dye house and tannery
- Light lunch in Trzic
- Iron Forging Museum in Kropa
- Medieval town of Radovljica
- *Fijaker* (horse drawn carriage) around Lake Bled
- Dinner at Julijana Restaurant on Lake Bled

Today we have a unique opportunity to explore the hardy, thrifty life of small Slovenian communities. The villages in the foothills of mountains and in the knots of their valleys in Upper Carniola (*Gorenjska*) near the border with Austria offer rare chances to savour the small places so often overlooked in tours that just go from capital to capital and tourist site to tourist site. We'll venture by coach into different valleys, each with its raging river, visiting Trzic to consider shoemaking and leatherwork, and Kropa to encounter iron forging.

After our visit to Kropa, we drive to the nearby market town of Radovljica to look at the art of beekeeping and to explore its medieval heritage.

Retraining to Lake Bled, we opt to succumb at day's end to gentility, not agility: a half-hour carriage ride (*fijaker*) takes us around the lake in time for sunset. The carriages leave us at our dinner venue, the elegant Julijana restaurant. After dinner, we walk the short distance back to our hotel. (Overnight Bled) BLD

Kobarid - 1 night

Day 8: Thursday 5 September, Bled – Vrsic Pass – Kobarid

- Scenic journey across the Julian Alps through Triglav National Park via the Vrsic Pass (1611m)
- Kozjak Waterfall
- Dinner at local restaurant

Departing Bled, we drive 4 hours on a mountain journey, regularly getting on and off the bus, exploring northwest Slovenia's Triglav National Park. We are now in the part of Slovenia closer to Italy, heading for Kobarid (*Caporetto* in Italian), once a battle front of the First World War, now a charming Slovene town with an Italian 'feel' where will dine in style and stay one night.

When Italy entered the war belatedly on the side of Britain and France in May 1915, the Italians found the going surprisingly tough attacking the Habsburg Empire all along the Isonzo River (*Soca* in Slovene; *Sortig*

in German, *Aesontius* in Latin) from its Adriatic estuary to the tips of the Julian Alps. The Vrsic Pass (1611m) and the Trenta Valley offer the most superlative views of the tour. We will walk to the waterfall at Kozjak and traverse some WWI trenches and mini forts. Our route on and over the Vrsic Pass was a Habsburg military re-supply route, built in part by Russian prisoners captured in Ukraine and Ruthenia. 300,000 soldiers perished here in 12 different battles, starting in June 1915, and ending in November 1917, when Habsburg forces finally broke through, and when the Bolsheviks seized power in Russia. After some time to freshen up at our hotel, we enjoy dinner at a local restaurant. Note: no portage is available at the Hotel Hvala in Kobarid. The hotel has a lift. (Overnight Kobarid) BLD

Piran - 2 nights

Day 9: Friday 6 September, Kobarid – Tolmin Gorges – Sempas – Skocjan – Piran

- Guided walking tour of the Tolmin Gorge (1.5-2hrs, gravel trail and boardwalk)
- Lunch at Arkade Cigoj in the Vipava Valley
- UNESCO World Heritage-Listed Skocjan Caves

We now head away from Kobarid and from the mountains down through the Tolmin Gorge. Also called Tolminska Korita, this is one of Slovenia's most magnificent natural attractions. Our local guide will take us along the 1-kilometre-long moss-covered gorge, which has been carved out by the crystal-clear Tolminka and Zadlascica Rivers.

Back on the coach, the mountains will eventually give way to rich agricultural land, where we will have a simple lunch in the Vipava valley, the most "foodie" destination of Slovenia. Then the same mountains will also cleave into limestone caves, where we will explore the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Skocjan Cave. We then turn west over other cave (*karst*) landscapes towards the sea.

This evening we reach the delightful Adriatic port town of Piran, the birthplace of the Baroque composer Giuseppe Tartini (1692-1770). You will enjoy the sea air here for two nights. Lovely little Piran dominates Slovenia's tiny 20-kilometre stretch of Adriatic coast; it is just 60 kilometres south of the Italian city of Trieste. Piran, sitting at the tip of a narrow peninsula, is one of the best-preserved historical towns anywhere in the Mediterranean. With an abundance of Venetian Gothic architecture, atmospheric winding alleyways, a bustling main square and harbour and plenty of seafood restaurants, Piran is a unique stop on this tour of mostly-landlocked Slovenia. Here is your chance to watch the sun set over the Adriatic! (Overnight Piran) BL

Day 10: Saturday 7 September, Piran – Lipica – Piran

- Lipica Stud Farm: View the training of Lipizzan Horses & tour the stud farm
- Afternoon at leisure in Piran

We shall have ample time to relax in this beautiful coastal town with only one firm engagement today. In the morning we shall view the training of famous Lipizzaner Horses on a stud farm about an hour northwest of Piran. Lunchtime and the afternoon will be at leisure. (Overnight Piran) B

Postojna - 1 night

Day 11: Sunday 8 September, Piran – Hrastovlje – Vipava – Postojna – Predjama – Postojna

- Church of the Holy Trinity with the famous *Dance Macabre* fresco, Hrastovlje
- Lunch at Gostilna Podfarovž in the village of Vipava
- Postojna Cave

- Castle of Predjama

We depart Piran, and meander back towards the 'real' Slovenia of stones and castles, inland foothills with fertile farms, vineyards and caves with amazing stalactites. We first drive 40 kilometres to the tiny fortified Church of the Holy Trinity (*cerkev sv. Trojice*) in Hrastovlje, a village not far from the border with Rijeka province in north-west Croatia. The church's fortified character reflects the depth of fear of Ottoman invasion in the 15th and 16th centuries. Within is a rare version of a subversive religious fresco known as *The Dance of Death* (*La danse macabre* in French, *Mrtvaški ples* in Slovene).

We then lunch at Gostilna Podfarovž and tipple in the village of Vipava, in the heart of the Vipava wine country, lands dear to Slovenia's greatest Habsburg diplomat, *Freiherr* Sigismund von Herbestein (1486-1566); he was one of the few diplomats to meet both an Ottoman Sultan and a Russian Grand Prince.

After lunch we take the cave train at Postojna, then walk through mighty caverns; they have some of the grandest stalagmites and stalactites in Europe. We then visit the impregnable castle at Predjama (*Predjamski Grad*). Predjama nestles inside a cliff. The castle only ever succumbed to one siege, in 1484. The story goes that a rebel Imperial *Burgrave* (Castellan), Erasmus von Lüg, was betrayed and killed when, according to local lore, Habsburg siege cannon were invited from within to be directed at the castle privy when Erasmus heeded the call of nature. Once a frontier between Aquileian (*Alto Veneto*) clerical-feudal and Habsburg spheres, Predjama was constructed in the 13th century, but what you see now dates from 16th century. If you thought your house renovations were complex, think again! (Overnight Postojna) BLD

Celje - 3 nights

Day 12: Monday 9 September, Postojna – Kamnik – Laze v Tuhinju – Celje

- Arboretum Volcji Potok, Kamnik
- Lunch at Orient restaurant, Kamnik
- Walking tour of medieval Kamnik including the Franciscan church and its library
- Beer and Schnapps tasting at Domaca pivovarna pod Menino

From Postojna, we'll skirt north of Ljubljana to reach the town of Kamnik. Our first stop is the Volcji Potok Arboretum. Established in 1885 as part of the Souvan family estate, it was made accessible to the public in 1952 when the University of Ljubljana took over. It has since been officially recognized as a site of significant cultural and natural heritage.

Following lunch at a local restaurant, we will explore the medieval town of Kamnik. Its origins can be traced back to the 11th century, and it was first mentioned as a town in 1229. Situated as an important trading post along the route connecting Ljubljana and Celje, Kamnik is one of Slovenia's oldest towns. During the Middle Ages, it held significant influence as a power centre for the Bavarian counts of Andechs in the Carniola region. The remnants of this noble lineage can still be seen in the form of two ruined castles strategically positioned on elevated ground near the town centre. Additionally, the Franciscan monastery, constructed within the town, serves as a testament to Kamnik's historical importance. We will have the opportunity to visit the church and its library, which houses a collection of *incunabula* – books printed prior to 1500.

The Tuhinj valley, known as "*Tuhinjska Dolina*" in Slovenian, serves as a connection between Ljubljana and Celje. As we journey through this route, we will be treated to breathtaking landscapes, expansive farmlands, traditional Slovenian hay racks called "*kozolci*," fortified churches, and picturesque villages. Along the way, we will make a stop at a local farm craft brewery where our hosts will treat us to a beer and schnapps tasting

experience.

We continue east to Celje for a three-night stay in *Hotel Evropa*. Celje is a beautiful Renaissance town in the *Savinja* (east-central Slovenia). This afternoon's drive takes us from the alpine sublime to Celje's fertile Balkan borderlands of pigs and grain, hops and grapes, beer and wine. Try the local brew: the *Laško* or the *Simon Kuček*. And why not karaoke in Slovene with the lyric about a Slovenian River (*Reka*) with the smooth Slovene modern-male equivalents of Almanach's *Card Sharps (Kvatropirci)* whom we met in the *National Gallery of Slovenia* in Ljubljana? (Slovene karaoke strictly optional and subject to opening hours on the night!) (Overnight Celje) BL

Day 13: Tuesday 10 September, Celje

- Regional Museum of Celje: 'Princely Palace'. Guided tour with Curator, Dr Jure Krajsek: *in situ* remains of antique Celeia; Guided tour with Curator, Mr Damir Zeric: Counts of Celje exhibition
- Celje Castle: Guided tour with Mr Damir Zeric
- Lunch at a local restaurant *Gostilna Francl*
- Regional Museum of Celje: 'Old Counts' Mansion'. Guided tour with Curator, Dr Jure Krajsek: *in situ* remains of antique Celeia; Guided tour with Curator, Ms Gabrijela Kovacic: Cultural History Collection and the Celje Ceiling

We spend all day in this charming town, the third largest in Slovenia, still with only 40,000 people. After the long era of barbarian migrations and invasions, the old Roman *colonia* of Celeia, in Noricum province, with its fertile hinterland, became medieval Celje guarded now by the incomparable castle (*Stari Grad*, late 14th century) of Counts of Žovnek-Celje (12th-15th centuries). This castle, across the Savinjska River from the town, enabled Counts of Celje to stem Habsburg ambitions until 1456, projecting their power over Croatia and making a major contribution to the failed Crusade at Nikopolis against the Ottomans (1396). Noble ladies of Celje, like the beautiful Barbara of Celje (1392-1451), regent of Hungary and wife of a Holy Roman Emperor (1433-37), Sigismund of Luxembourg, often figured in dynastic marriages in adjacent Hungary and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, countering Habsburg claimants. Highlights of the city include visits, led by local museum experts, to the two parts of the regional museum (*Pokrajinski Muzei*), one being the Townhouse of the later Princes (*Knežji Dvorec*) with the rare survival of a Renaissance *trompe d'oeil* ceiling (*Celjski Strop*, 1600), and the other being the earlier 15th-century porticoed barracks and townhouse of the Counts (*Stara Grofija*) housing the archaeological and medieval-historical museum. We will first visit the Princes' Townhouse, then drive to the Castle. We lunch in a restaurant in the hills, dating from 1895: Peter Zaveršek's *Gostilna Francl*. In the afternoon we visit the Old Counts' Townhouse, which also hosted war crimes trials in July 1945, as well as the town centre. We pass the old prison, *Stari Pisker*; hundreds of hostages were shot here in 1942 in retaliation for Partisan resistance to the *Wehrmacht's* rule over the country and this city from 11 April 1941 to 13 May 1945. (Overnight Celje) BL

Day 14: Wednesday 11 September, Celje – Ptuj – Maribor – Celje

- Ptuj Castle & Old Town
- Walking tour of Maribor including wine-tasting and visit to the oldest vine house

We venture today by coach through the Štajerska wine region for one hour from our base at Celje to the beautiful medieval city of Ptuj (Roman *Poetovio*), touring its castle, then lingering over a coffee and wandering the old town. Then we venture a half-hour further to Maribor (pop. 100,000), the second largest city in Slovenia. We encounter a vine in Maribor city itself reputed, on good visual evidence, to be oldest living vine in Europe: at least 450 years old! This is the vine outside 'The Old Vine House', where we quaff, lunch and learn heaps more about local wines. In this Štajerska wine region, we have entered a contested

Magyar (Hungarian)-German-Slav sphere at the western-most end of the Eurasian plain. This *Podravska* province of Slovenia follows the Drava River (*Drau* in German). Maribor is also important because it is a minor place in the history of the Second World War that nonetheless can tell us a great deal about the nature of that war. Hitler attempted to 'Germanise' the local Slovenes as well as moving German settlers into the region which, he believed, could then become part of the German homeland. Hitler backed these follies by enabling the murder, deportation and forced labour of Slovenes, even separating children from suspect families in November 1942. As we enjoy the wine and the mix of cultures in this wonderful heritage region, we can still contemplate barbarous follies it had to endure, and indeed overcome, to achieve this convivial hospitality. (Overnight Celje) BL

Zagreb - 3 nights

Day 15: Thursday 12 September, Celje – Kostanjevica na Krki – Otocec – Zagreb

- Kostanjevica na Krki, a small settlement on an island in the Krka river
- Božidar Jakac Art Museum, Cistercian Monastery Samostan Kostanjevica na Krki
- Lunch at the 16th-century castle of Otocec

We depart Celje today by coach for our final destination, Zagreb, capital of Croatia. We travel via southern Slovenia (lower Carniola; *Dolenj*). On the way, we explore a little heritage town on an island in the Krka River: Kostanjevica na Krki, dating from the mid-13th century. On arrival in Kostanjevica na Krki we take a morning coffee break, then encounter a Cistercian monastery (*Samostan*), dating from the early 13th century, which encouraged the growth of the adjacent market town. Cistercians were a reformed Benedictine Order of muscular monks and colonisers who valued agricultural labour, and fine, spare architecture. As in Transylvania, further east, they were invited here by Kings of Hungary to stabilise and colonise a wild region. Their extensive monastery complex was abandoned in 1785 at the order of the Habsburg Emperor, Joseph II, who began to dissolve the great monastic estates (*der Klostersturm*) in 1782, seizing their revenues. The charming shell of the church and the imposing monastery complex now houses one of the best art collections in Slovenia: the Božidar Jakac Art Museum, which we shall tour. Highlights include the work of Anton (Tone) Kralj (1900-75).

Next we stop for lunch at the beautiful 16th-century castle of Otocec, the retirement home of one the great leaders of the Habsburg resistance against Ottoman incursion: Ivan Lenkovic. He was the leader of a Cossack-like corps of raiders, wild free-booters who were known as the *Uskoks of Senj*. Otocec Castle and its elegant restaurant sit in a lovely forest surrounding another island in the Krka River.

After lunch we head to Zagreb, 50 kilometres east of the border with Slovenia. We pass two mid-12th-century castles as we follow the mighty Sava River: Brestanica (*Rajhenburg*), and Brežice (*Rann*), sites where Nazi occupiers deported Slovenes in 1942-44. This evening is at leisure at our hotel in the heart of Zagreb, the Esplanade Hotel. (Overnight Zagreb) BL

Day 16: Friday 13 September, Zagreb

- Introductory walking tour of Zagreb
- Croatian Museum of Naïve Art: Guided visit with Curator
- Jozo Kljakovic Memorial Art Collection
- Walking tour of Kaptol District

We walk the streets of Zagreb, a confident and relatively new Slavonic inland capital city of 800,000 people. Most people who think they 'know' Croatia really only know the coasts of Dalmatia, with their Venetian and

classical Greco-Roman heritages. On this Adriatic coast, the Balkans sometimes seem an afterthought, even though they were key to the prosperity of Ragusa (Dubrovnik). Zagreb is like the Melbourne of Alfred Deakin: a Victorian-age city, commercial from the outset, national by conviction. Once two minor medieval towns, one upper, the other lower, each loathing the other, Zagreb thrived only when it became the key gubernatorial post (*Ban*) in the western Balkan parts of the Habsburg Empire. Ljubljana thrived likewise, but earlier at first, and then later (in Plecnik's *Art Nouveau* times). Led first by its *Bans*, later despite them, Zagreb became – in 1848-49, in 1918-19, in 1928-45, and in 1990-95 – a centre shaping national “Illyrian” feeling of resistance against imperial domination by Magyars, Habsburgs, Serbs and Serb-Yugoslavs. While the affinities of their South Slav native languages united Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, the anchors of national feeling and of resistance to empire for educated Serbs were Orthodox, Cyrillic and Byzantine, not Roman Catholic and Latin, as in Croatia. And the capitals of the oppressors they came to loathe also differed in the imaginations of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. The Serbs’ oppressors seemed based in Constantinople, and perhaps in Albania, Bulgaria and Bosnia; the Croats and Slovenes instead regarded Vienna equivocally, scarcely regarding Moscow or Constantinople (Istanbul) as a danger.

We spend most of our day in the Upper Town (*Gornji Grad*). Here we take a curator-led tour of the unique Croatian Museum of Naïve Art (*Hrvatski Muzej Naivne Umetnosti*). A highlight here is the rural national imagery of Ivan Generalic (1914-92). We then lunch in an incomparable Croatian village cuisine restaurant: Konoba Didov San.

After lunch we visit the art collection of Croatian painter Jozo Kljakovic. He lived in the Art Nouveau neighbourhood of Rokov Perivoj. Notably, he painted a cycle of 14 frescoes for the St. Mark’s Church in the city. He was chiefly influenced by Art Nouveau, Ferdinand Hodler and Ivan Meštrovic, a friend of his. In Croatia he is described as a master of fresco painting and his former home is now an art centre.

Before returning to the lower town, taking the steps or the funicular, we explore the Kaptol District, the historic centre of Zagreb. It is a tranquil area with old-world charm, thanks to its medieval buildings, gas lamps, and the Kaptol manors, a collection of colourful, ornate mansions built between the 16th and 19th centuries. The name ‘Zagreb’ was first used in 1094, when the diocese was founded on the hill. Kaptol comes from the Latin word “capitulum” meaning group of canons. The Cathedral was consecrated in 1217, later damaged during the Mongol invasion, and restored and rebuilt after 1263. Kaptol had no fortifications; it was merely enclosed with wooden fences or palisades. Fearing the Turkish invasion, the Bishop had the fortifications built around the Cathedral and his residence in the late 15th century. The defensive towers and walls have been preserved to the present day. (Overnight Zagreb) BL

Day 17: Saturday 14 September, Zagreb

- National Theatre area and Zagreb Botanic Garden
- Arts & Crafts Museum
- Afternoon at leisure
- Farewell Dinner at Dubravkin Put restaurant

We do not have to venture far from our hotel today. One block one way is Zagreb Botanic Garden. Founded in 1889 by Antun Heinz, Professor of the University of Zagreb, and opened to public in 1891, it is part of the Faculty of Science. Covering an area of 5 hectares (12 acres), it is home to over 10,000 plant species from around the world, including 1,800 exotic ones. It has large ponds for aquatic plants. Some of Slava Raškaj’s most notable works were painted by the garden ponds.

Reaching the Croatian National Theatre, we’ll have time to explore the area. The theatre originated from the first city theatre established in 1834, which was housed in the current Old City Hall. It was officially

founded as the Croatian National Theatre in 1860. In 1870, an opera company was incorporated, and in 1895, it relocated to its current purpose-built venue on Republic of Croatia Square in Zagreb's Lower Town. The unveiling of this new building was attended by Austro-Hungarian emperor Franz Joseph I during his visit to the city in 1895. Designed by renowned Viennese architects Ferdinand Fellner and Herman Helmer, who had constructed several theatres in Vienna, this neo-Baroque building stands as a testament to their expertise. Adorning the theatre entrance is the wall fountain "The Source of Life" (Zdenac života), a creation by Croatian artist and sculptor Ivan Meštrović in 1905.

We then visit the nearby Arts & Crafts Museum. Established in 1880, the museum was inspired by the principles of England's Arts and Crafts movement. The museum's approach focused on preserving traditional crafts and fostering a new aesthetic culture for the middle class. Designed by Hermann Bollé and completed in 1888, the building was among the first purpose-built structures to combine the functions of a museum and a school. Architecturally, it reflects a grand historicist style reminiscent of the German Renaissance era. The museum's permanent exhibition spans three floors, covering over 2,000 square meters and showcasing around 3,000 artifacts that demonstrate the evolution of styles from Gothic to Art Deco. With a collection of more than 160,000 objects dating from the 4th to the 20th century, the museum offers a comprehensive exploration of artistic and design history.

After this visit, there is time at leisure to have lunch and explore Zagreb further, at your leisure. Before dinner, you may wish to try a plum brandy (*šljivovica* in Croatian; *slivovo žganje* in Slovene) or a walnut brandy (*orahovac*; *orehovo žganje*). Our Farewell Dinner this evening is held at chef Priska Thuring's stylish Dubravkin Put restaurant on the edge of the Upper Town (*Gornji Grad*). (Overnight Zagreb) BD

Day 18: Sunday 15 September, Depart Zagreb

- Tour concludes in the morning
- At leisure/Check out

Our tour ends in Zagreb after breakfast. In the morning you will be required to check out of the hotel. Please contact ASA if you require assistance with a transfer to Zagreb Airport. B

Accommodation

ASA has selected 4-star hotels that are themselves historical buildings and/or are located in historical centres. All hotels provide rooms with en suite bathroom. Further information on hotels will be provided in the 'Tour Hotel List' given to tour members prior to their departure.

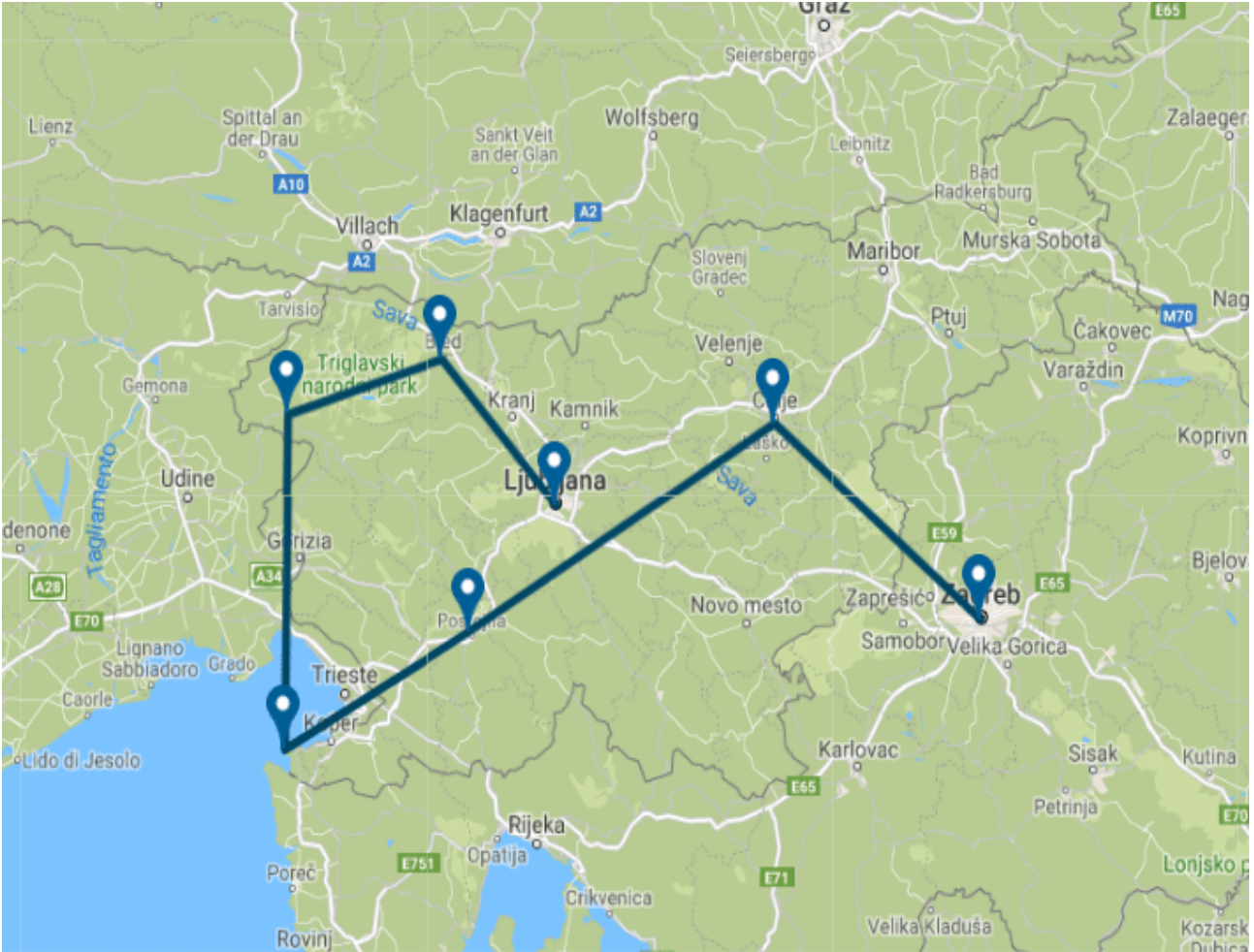
- Ljubljana (4 nights): 4-star uHotel – located in the heart of the city with views of the medieval castle. <https://www.eurostarshotels.co.uk/>
- Bled (3 nights): 4-star Superior Rikli Balance Hotel - Sava Hotels & Resorts – recently renovated modern hotel, located in the town centre, offering panoramic views of Lake Bled and the Julian Alps. www.sava-hotels-resorts.com
- Kobarid (1 night): 4-star Hotel Hvala – a family-run hotel & restaurant located in the Soca Valley. www.hotelhvala.si
- Piran (2 nights): 4-star Hotel Piran – an historic hotel featuring a sea front location in the old town centre. hotel-piran.si
- Postojna (1 night): 4-star Hotel Jama – renovated in 2016, the hotel is located in the Postojna Cave Park. www.postojnska-jama.eu
- Celje (3 nights): 4-star Hotel Evropa – built in 1873, this historic hotel is located in the heart of the medieval town. hotel-evropa.si
- Zagreb, Croatia (3 nights): 5-star Esplanade Zagreb Hotel – built in 1925 for the passengers of the old Orient Express, this Art Nouveau hotel has been the centre of Zagreb's social life. It is located in the city centre, a 5-minute walk from the main square. esplanade.hr

Note: *hotels are subject to change, in which case a hotel of similar standard will be provided.*

Single Supplement

Payment of this supplement will ensure accommodation in a double/twin room for single occupancy room throughout the tour. The number of rooms available for single occupancy is extremely limited. People wishing to take this supplement are therefore advised to book well in advance.

Tour Map



Tour Price & Inclusions

AUD \$11,980.00 Land Content Only – Early-Bird Special: Book before 30 Sep 2023

AUD \$12,180.00 Land Content Only

AUD \$1860.00 Single Supplement

Tour Price (Land Content Only) includes:

- Accommodation in twin-share rooms with en suite bathroom in 4-star hotels
- Lunches and evening meals indicated in the tour itinerary where: B=breakfast, L=lunch & D=dinner.
- Drinks at welcome and farewell meals. Other meals may not have drinks included.
- Transportation by air-conditioned coach
- Porterage of one piece of luggage per person at 6 of the 7 hotels (not at airports). No porterage is available at the Kobarid hotel. The hotel has a lift.
- Lecture and site visit program
- Local guides
- Entrance fees
- Use of audio headsets during site visits
- Tips for the coach driver, local guides and restaurants for included meals

Tour Price (Land Content Only) does not include:

- Airfare: Australia-Ljubljana, Zagreb-Australia
- Personal spending money
- Airport-hotel transfers
- Luggage in excess of 20kg (44lbs)
- Travel insurance
- Visas (if applicable)
- Porterage at Hotel Hvala, Kobarid



Physical Endurance & Practical Information

Physical Ratings 

The number of flags is a guide to the degree of difficulty of ASA tours relative to each other (not to those of other tour companies). It is neither absolute nor literal. One flag is given to the least taxing tours, seven to the most. Flags are allocated, above all, according to the amount of walking and standing each tour involves. Nevertheless, all ASA tours require that participants have a good degree of fitness enabling 2-3 hours walking or 1-1.5 hours standing still on any given site visit or excursion. Many sites are accessed by climbing slopes or steps and have uneven terrain.

This 18-day cultural tour of Slovenia involves:

- Visiting some sites and towns (eg. Ptuj) that require walking up steps or uphill on uneven/cobbled streets. Cobbled streets can be very slippery during rain showers!
- A moderate amount of walking during site visits and standing during museum and other site visits.
- Visiting waterfalls, caves and gorges as indicated in the itinerary. It is recommended that you wear shoes with good grip and bring warm clothes; temperatures may be as low as 10 degrees (celsius) inside the cave.
- Extensive coach travel, sometimes on winding mountain roads; road conditions are variable.
- 4-star hotels with six hotel changes.
- You must be able to carry your own hand luggage. Hotel portage service is provided in most hotels (not in Kobarid); it includes 1 piece of luggage per person.

It is important to remember that ASA programs are group tours, and slow walkers affect everyone in the group. As the group must move at the speed of the slowest member, the amount of time spent at a site may be reduced if group members cannot maintain a moderate walking pace. ASA tours should not present any problem for active people who can manage day-to-day walking and stair-climbing. However, if you have any doubts about your ability to manage on a program, please ask your ASA travel consultant whether this is a suitable tour for you.

Please note: it is a condition of travel that all participants agree to accept ASA's directions in relation to their suitability to participate in activities undertaken on the tour, and that ASA retains the sole discretion to direct a tour participant to refrain from a particular activity on part of the tour. For further information please refer to the ASA Reservation Application Form.

Booking Conditions

ASA RESERVATION APPLICATION FORM

Please complete the ASA RESERVATION APPLICATION and send it to Australians Studying Abroad together with your non-refundable deposit of AUD \$1000.00 per person payable to Australians Studying Abroad.



Reservation Application

TOUR NAME _____
TOUR DATES _____

Please complete **one application, per person in block letters and sign**. Parental signature is required for participants under 18 years of age. Please mail this form with the appropriate deposit to: **P.O. Box 8285, ARMADALE, VICTORIA, 3143**. On receipt of this Reservation Application and deposit, ASA will process your booking and if approved, send you a tour confirmation.

Applicant Details (as in passport)

TITLE Mr Mrs Ms Miss Dr Other _____
FIRST NAME _____ Preferred FIRST NAME _____
MIDDLE NAME _____ SURNAME _____
POSTAL ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ COUNTRY _____ POSTCODE _____
TEL. (AH) () _____ TEL. (BH) () _____ Mobile Tel: _____
EMAIL address _____
Date of birth ____ / ____ / _____ GENDER Male Female

Passport Number _____ Expiry date ____ / ____ / ____ Nationality _____
 Colour copy of my current valid passport enclosed I'm renewing my passport ASA has a colour copy of my current passport

Covid Certificate A copy of my current international certificate enclosed

Travel Plans

I plan to leave Australia before the tour commences. Planned departure date ____ / ____ / ____
 I will be arranging my airfare independently and taking the Land Content Only option.

Tour Accommodation (rooming preferences)

I/we would like: a twin-bedded room a double-bedded room a room for sole occupancy
I am travelling: on my own with a friend/family member Travel Companion _____

Meals

I do not have any specific dietary requests

Please **X** the box if you **CAN NOT** eat any of the following:

fish poultry red meat dairy products

eggs pork nuts

Other _____

Allergies: Refer to the Medical Information

Correspondence

Your preferred method of correspondence Postal Mail Email Address _____

Emergency Contact Details

Note: this person **MUST** be available by telephone and be present in Australia for the duration of your tour with ASA

Name _____ Relationship to Traveller _____

Address _____

TEL. (AH) () _____ TEL. (BH) () _____ Mobile Tel: _____

EMAIL address _____

The purpose of seeking this information is to assist ASA to determine, where necessary, whether ASA is able to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate your specific needs and whether your health and safety (or that of your fellow travellers) is likely to be compromised given your choice of tour. It will also assist you and ASA if you fall ill or have an accident whilst travelling.

- ASA reserves the right to decline your Reservation Application if this Medical Information section is not completed properly and may reject or cancel your reservation, or terminate your participation on any tour, if ASA subsequently learns that you have failed to make full and proper disclosure.
- ASA is committed to protecting the privacy of your personal information. ASA's privacy policy is available for viewing at www.asatours.com.au
- If ASA has any concerns about the information you have provided, it will contact you to request clarification before considering your Application.
- ASA requires you to consider carefully your limitations in light of ASA's Physical Endurance Star Rating System in ASA's Brochure and Itinerary when choosing your tour.
- If you are not likely to satisfy ASA's Participation Criteria (see below), ASA, in its sole discretion, may reject your Reservation Application.
- It is a condition of your tour that you agree to accept the directions of ASA's Tour Leaders in relation to your suitability to participate in activities planned on tour.
- ASA reserves the right to cancel your participation on a tour if your behaviour is in ASA's opinion causing undue distress or damage to any person or their property.
- If your participation is discontinued during a tour, ASA will assist by arranging your onward travel (if required) at your own cost, but you will not be refunded for forfeited parts of the tour.
- ASA tour groups are not accompanied by a medical practitioner. ASA recommends that you see your doctor for advice about your specific needs while overseas. You may also wish to contact a travel and vaccination clinic for advice. www.traveldoctor.com.au tel: 1300 658 444; www.travelvax.com.au tel: 1300 360 164.
- Travel insurers require you to declare all existing medical conditions.
- Please carry a complete list of medications with you during the ASA tour. Include **generic names** of each medication (consult your local pharmacy for information).

Please mark **X** in the YES or NO box to every question below and provide details where necessary:

Participation Criteria

To participate in an ASA tour, you must be reasonably fit, in good health and able to participate in all activities without assistance from Tour Leaders or other tour members. **You must also be fully vaccinated against Covid-19.** If you require assistance, a fit and able travel companion must undertake to accompany and assist you with all tasks for the duration of the whole tour. The responsibility of the Tour Leader is to ensure that the larger group enjoys a relaxing and informative journey, and he or she cannot be relied upon to provide ongoing individual assistance to any one guest.

- | | YES | NO |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Can you walk and stand unassisted for at least 2-3 hours a day in hot, humid conditions? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. Can you walk unassisted on and over uneven surfaces? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. Can you climb at least 3 flights of stairs and/or walk up and down steep slopes unassisted? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. Can you walk at a steady pace and no less than 1km every 15 - 20 minutes unassisted? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. Can you organise, manage and carry your own luggage? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. Can you follow and remember tour instructions and meet punctually at designated times and places? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. Can you administer your own medication? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. You do NOT have impaired vision or hearing which may impact your capacity to participate on this tour? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Mobility and Fitness

As many of ASA's international sites do not provide access to wheelchairs or similar mobility aids, we regret that ASA tours are not suitable for people who require the use of a walking frame, wheeled walker, wheelchair or motorised scooter.

1. Do you suffer from any medical conditions that may compromise your mobility and/or fitness to participate on this program? YES NO
- If yes, please specify

If yes, how will you manage this on tour?

Allergies and/or Food Intolerances

ASA will make reasonable endeavours to organise meals to suit you, provided that you give ASA adequate notice of your specific dietary requirements or allergies. You may be required to research dietary alternatives, as not all destinations may be able to offer suitable food substitutes.

1. Do you have any food allergies or intolerances? YES NO
- If yes, please specify

2. Have you ever had an anaphylactic reaction to anything?
- If yes, please specify

Do you carry an epipen?

3. Do you have any other allergies or reactions to anything, including medical drugs?
- If yes, please specify

Existing Medical Conditions

You alone are responsible for managing any existing medical conditions, your medication and any medical equipment that you may need when on your tour. Please plan for contingencies and take extra medication, dietary supplements and/or fully charged batteries for medical equipment if your health and safety depends on these. You should take into consideration that power sources at some destinations may be unavailable, inadequate, inconvenient or unreliable.

1. Have you any significant medical conditions that may impact your capacity to complete this tour? YES NO
- If yes, please specify

If yes, how will you manage this on tour?

2. Do you require some form of powered medical aid, such as a CPAP machine?

These machines may not be operable on certain international flights, modes of transport, in remote or other areas with inadequate or unreliable power sources without a fully charged independent long life battery or batteries.

Diabetics: You may be travelling and sightseeing for many hours at a time. Insulin dependent diabetics must carry extra supplies of insulin (as this medication cannot be obtained in some destinations), regulators, applicators, storage and refrigeration equipment, as well as any necessary supplements. Accommodation may not provide refrigerators in rooms.

3. Are you diabetic?

Are you insulin dependent?

4. Do you suffer from travel sickness?
- Remember to use an appropriate medication while on tour.

Declaration

I declare that: I have read and understood the ASA Tour Itinerary, Reservation Application and Booking Conditions. I am aware of ASA's terms as relating to refunds, cancellations, responsibility and liability. I understand that ASA relies upon this declaration when considering this Application. I accept the inherent dangers, risks and uncertainties in travel and those beyond ASA's control and understand they may occur before or during any tour. I have made full and complete disclosure and have not knowingly withheld any medical information about myself from ASA. I have completed this Reservation Application honestly and accurately. I warrant that I am able to participate independently in all activities described by ASA in the itinerary without assistance from any person.

I will advise ASA in writing if any aspect of my fitness and or health conditions change materially at any time before my departure date. I understand and accept that the itinerary, accommodation and lecturers scheduled for this tour may change.

I agree and consent that ASA may give my personal information in this Reservation Application to tour service providers and relevant authorities as required by law, but only for the purpose of making bookings with and engaging services associated with the tour. I understand that if I do not consent to the use of my personal information for this purpose, ASA will decline my Reservation Application.

In consideration of ASA's acceptance of my Reservation Application, I irrevocably release and indemnify ASA from all claims that I, or any other party, may have against ASA its employees, invitees, agents and contractors, however arising in respect of any loss, damage, injury, death or expense incurred in the course of booking, preparing for, travelling to, on and from or cancelling any tour.

I release and indemnify ASA with respect to:

1. Every general risk to which I or my personal belongings may be exposed in the course of preparing for, travelling to, on or from any ASA tour;
2. Every special risk, in particular medical risks, to which I may be exposed in the course of preparing for, travelling to, on or from any ASA tour arising from, including, but not limited to:
 - a. intermittent power cycles and/or the temporary or permanent loss of power (beware CPAP or any other medical machine users);
 - b. dietary, food or other allergies (ASA cannot guarantee that traces of items to which you are allergic are not present in food or drink you are served, medication you are administered or other substances with which you may come into contact);
 - c. any event or situation that may compromise the administration of necessary medication or my health, safety and wellbeing generally; and
 - d. any event or happening beyond ASA's control
3. All claims arising as a result of my or ASA's cancellation or termination of any tour, part of a tour or of my continued participation on a tour for any reason (subject to ASA's refund conditions below).

Limitation of Liability

ASA is not a carrier, event or tourist attraction host, accommodation or dining service provider. All bookings made and tickets or coupons issued by ASA for transport, event, accommodation, dining and the like are issued as an agent for various service providers and are subject to the terms and conditions and limitations of liability imposed by each service provider. ASA is not responsible for their products, services, terms and conditions. If a service provider cancels or does not deliver the product or service for which you have contracted, and does not give a refund, your remedy lies with the service provider, not ASA.

ASA will not be liable for any claim (e.g. sickness, injury, death, damage or loss) arising from any change, delay, detention, breakdown, border closures, cancellation, failure, accident, act, omission or negligence of any tour service provider or authority however caused (contingencies). You must take out such travel insurance as is available against such contingencies.

ASA's liability in respect of any tour cancelled or changed will be limited to the partial refund of amounts you have paid, less an administration fee of \$500 and other costs and charges of third party service providers. No compensation will be payable to you by ASA where ASA cancels or changes a tour, or any part of a tour.

ASA reserves the sole discretion to cancel any tour or to modify itineraries in any way it considers appropriate and in the best interests of health, safety and wellbeing of tour participants. Tour costs may be revised, subject to unexpected price increases or exchange rate fluctuations.

Booking Conditions

DEPOSITS

A non-refundable deposit of \$1000.00 AUD per person is required to reserve a place on an ASA tour.

CANCELLATION FEES

If you cancel your booking the following charges apply:

More than 75 days before departure: your initial deposit of \$1000.00 is non-refundable.**

75-31 days prior 50% of total amount due

30-0 days prior 100% of total amount due

**\$500.00 of this amount (ie 50% of your deposit) may be credited to another ASA tour departing within 12 months of the original tour you booked. We regret, in this case early-bird discounts will not apply.

We take the day on which you cancel as being that on which we receive written confirmation of cancellation.

UNUSED PORTIONS OF THE TOUR

We regret that refunds will not be given for any unused portions or services of the tour, such as meals, entry fees, accommodation, flights or transfers.

WILL THE TOUR PRICE OR ITINERARY CHANGE?

If the number of participants on a tour is significantly less than budgeted, or if there is a significant change in exchange rates ASA reserves the right to amend the advertised price. We shall, however, do all in our power to maintain the published price. Occasionally circumstances beyond the control of ASA make it necessary to change airline, hotel or to make amendments to itineraries. We will inform you of any changes in due course.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

ASA requires all participants to obtain comprehensive travel insurance. A copy of your travel insurance certificate and the **reverse charge** emergency contact phone number must be received by ASA no later than 75 days prior to the commencement of the tour.

FINAL PAYMENT

The balance of the tour price will be due 75 days prior to the tour commencement date.

PLEASE READ THE ABOVE CAREFULLY, PRINT AND SIGN BELOW

I accept the conditions on this booking form I have read the information about the physical requirements of the tour in the detailed itinerary and confirm that I am able to meet these requirements

Applicant's Signature

Print Full Name

Dated

Tour / Course Name

Name of Traveller 1 _____

Name of Traveller 2 _____

I have enclosed a payment to the value of \$ _____ (including CC or bank fee if applicable) for this tour

The above amount is payable for:

- Intention to Travel Tour Deposit
 Balance of Payment Upgrade from Intention to Travel to a Deposit
 Travel Insurance Other (eg. Airfares, Accommodation) _____

International Payments

Welcome to our international travellers! If you are making a payment and do not have an Australian bank account/credit card, we can only accept payment as follows:

- via credit card with the applicable fee - the credit card company/bank will set the exchange rate
- via bank transfer; please give your surname and tour code (eg. Smith 21705) as a reference and ask your bank to allow for all charges.

Bank cheques or personal cheques will not be accepted.

By Cheque (accept Australian cheques only)

Please make cheques payable to *Australians Studying Abroad*

Direct Deposit or Internet Banking

You will need to:

1. Provide your bank with ASA's bank details (see below) and the amount you wish to transfer OR make a direct deposit through any ANZ branch
2. Include any fees levied by the banks
3. Provide a reference number (Mobile or last name recommended).
4. Complete section below, including confirmation no. (given when transaction completed).

Australians Studying Abroad bank details

Bank ANZ
Branch 420 St Kilda Road, Melbourne Vic
Swift Code ANZBAU3M
BSB 013-423
Account No 3472-32759

Bank confirmation No. _____

Reference used: Mobile or last name recommended

Date Money Transferred _____

Credit Card Payment

Credit card fees apply: Mastercard, Visa & American Express 2%

Please debit my: Mastercard Visa American Express

I authorise ASA to debit my credit card for the amount due plus the applicable fee as above

Credit Card Number _____

Expiry Date _____ Security Code (CVC) _____

Bank the Card is linked to (eg. NAB or ANZ) _____

Cardholders Name _____

Cardholders Billing Address _____

Postcode _____

State _____ Country _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Cardholders Signature _____