

SOUTHERN SEA VENTURES

CROATIA –THE DOLPHIN TRAIL

10 DAY TRIP: 7 DAYS SEA KAYAKING, 1 DAY WALKING

Croatia is home to one of Europe's largest archipelagoes with over 1,200 islands. Curving around Bosnia, the coastline stretches along the Adriatic from Slovenia in the north to Montenegro and Albania in the south.

The first reserve for Adriatic Dolphins in the Mediterranean is our paddling playground for this new trip. The protected waters of Cres and nearby islands are full of hidden coves, colourful beaches and caves. Dense forests and the aromatic scent of wild herbs along the beaches make for idyllic camping. On the lookout for dolphins, we kayak from island to island, taking time out for coastal treks and a daily snorkel. Natural history surrounds us on this magical adventure along the dolphin trail.

Designed for people with some paddling experience, this is the easiest of our Croatian itineraries. We paddle from the Bay of Koromachna to the Bay of Mrtvaska. This is a voyage of exploration **and may be subject to some deviations in the itinerary depending on the weather conditions we encounter.** Overnight campsites include remote beaches, private islands and the occasional public campground. Come and join us on our brand new adventure in beautiful Croatia!

A QUICK ITINERARY

Day 1	Pick up at Zadar airport, transfer to Rab, overnight hotel.	D
Days 2-5	Boat transfer to the Bay of Koromachna. Paddle to Mali Loshinj.	BLD
Day 6	Excursion to Veli Loshinj, Dolphin Research Centre. Hike.	BLD
Days 7-8	Island kayaking	BLD
Day 9	Kayak to Bay of Mrtvaska. Finish kayaking, boat transfer to Rab. Overnight hotel.	BLD
Day 10	Airport transfer. Trip concludes	B

MEETING PLACE AND TIME

As people arrive directly from overseas and also from various points within Croatia we have several meeting options on Day 1 of the trip. **Please make sure we know of your preferred arrangement and do check with us before booking your flights. Local flight times may change so please allow enough time for connections. If you are unable to book an early flight or are concerned with delays, we recommend you arrive the day before the trip as we need to connect with a ferry to the island of Rab on Day 1. Transfer time from Zadar to Rab takes approximately two hours**

1. Zadar airport - we will do one group pickup at the airport at approximately 2pm. This time will be confirmed when 2009 flight schedules are made available.
2. Make your own way to the Istra hotel on the island of Rab. The hotel check in is not until the afternoon but the hotel can look after your bags until your room is ready.

HOW TO GET THERE

Several airlines have flights to Zadar from European cities. It is advisable to book flights early as the routes may be busy. There are several bus companies in Croatia with extensive networks around the country and a very good coastal ferry service. Your travel agent and/or internet research can provide timetables.



PADDLING EXPERIENCE

This trip is designed for people with some previous paddling experience. You do not have to be an expert or know how to roll. However, you should have practiced a wet exit and assisted re-entry before the trip. This can easily be practiced in waist deep warm water with a friend's help or under tuition. We are always happy to discuss your experience and can often suggest how beginner paddlers might gain the necessary experience at home to prepare for the trip. We require all participants to complete and return our "Experience Form" shortly after booking. It is important to recognize that the weather **and wind** will influence greatly what we can and can't do.

We predominantly use single kayaks on this trip, but some doubles are available. The degree of difficulty of the trip will depend on the weather we encounter. The wind in the Adriatic can vary from gentle puffs to strong gusts so you should be used to paddling in a variety of conditions. We paddle between 3 to 6 hours per day. It is important to realise that the group will kayak at the speed of the slowest members. All participants should feel confident in swimming.

The kayaks we use are stable, easy to paddle and control. They are designed as expedition boats and it is important to keep gear to a minimum as we carry on board all our food and equipment. Our trip leaders are highly experienced sea kayakers and professional guides. On Day 2 you will be given a thorough briefing on your equipment and trip safety with time to adjust your individual boats. ****Note – if you choose to use a double kayak then you will have less storage space and should take that into consideration when packing. Please refer to our equipment list for details on what to pack.**

As with most activities, the fitter you are, the more you will enjoy the paddling. We highly recommended participants become involved in regular exercise (paddling, walking, jogging, cycling, aerobics or swimming) some months prior to the trip. We generally limit our group to a maximum of 10 clients, plus the 2 guides.

PROPOSED ITINERARY

The following itinerary should be seen as an approximate guide only. Our aim is to have a genuine Croatian adventure and a great time rather than being governed by a rigid schedule. Our program may change over the 10 days to take advantage of any opportunities that may arise, local weather conditions and preferences of the group. **Please note that weather conditions, transport breakdowns and other factors can cause alterations and delays to our itinerary.**

Day 1 – Transfer to our hotel accommodation in Rab, the Istra Hotel. Trip briefing is held at 7.00pm followed by a welcome dinner. We will give out dry-bags to pack for the kayak trip, the bag size is approximately 20 litres for essentials that have to stay dry. Any excess luggage that you do not take kayaking can be stored in our Rab hotel where we return on Day 9. A tour of the old city of Rab will be adjusted to everyone's arrival time.

Day 2 – Breakfast at hotel. Three hour boat transfer to the bay of Koromacna where we start our trip. The first day of the tour we paddle only 8 kms until we reach the wonderful beach of Meli. Dinner in camp. 8 km.

Day 3 – Breakfast on the beach followed by a short paddle to the island of Čutin where we'll do some snorkeling and have lunch. After lunch we paddle to the bay of Vrč passing by the colourful north side of Cres Island. Dinner in camp. 14 km

Day 4 – Wake up to the aroma of coffee brewing and breakfast cooking. Swimming and paddling the most beautiful part of the island named Cape Cross. The cape is a spectacular area rich in flora and fauna. Punta Križa is the picture of tranquillity with a large and untouched beach, dense forest with hundreds of animals such as deer, fawns, mouflon and birds like owls and hawks. We paddle this coastline until we reach the bay of Baldarin. Dinner in camp. 17 km.



Day 5 – After breakfast we cross a 7 km wide canal and reach our camp spot by lunch-time. Then we paddle towards the southern coves of the Mali Lošinj Bay. In the evening, we go to the town of Mali Lošinj for dinner. 15 km

Day 6 – We'll start the day in our usual style with breakfast, coffee and swimming. We put our paddles aside today and visit the town of Veli Lošinj (Big Lošinj), which is smaller than Mali Lošinj (Small Lošinj). A marine institute for exploring and protecting the sea, "Blue World", was established in Veli Lošinj and is well worth a visit. After "adopting the dolphin" at the institute we'll go for lunch and then trek back to our campsite by the sea. Dinner in camp. 6 km walk.

Day 7 – After breakfast, we will paddle by the fragrant coves and beaches filled with 230 species of colourful Mediterranean therapeutic herbs. The scents will follow us until we reach the bay of Tršćanka situated by the island with the same name. After setting up camp we'll paddle and explore two small nearby islands, Big and Small Orjule. These two islands are connected with a sandy bank and are great for snorkeling. Not far away from these islands is the site of the unique bronze statue of Apoksiomen dating back to the 4th century B.C. Dinner in camp. 14 km.

Day 8 – We kayak towards the island of Ilovik passing by the island of St. Peter on which is situated an 11th century abbey. People from Ilovik enjoy a long life expectancy, some say due to the healthy Mediterranean diet and the island being car free! After lunch we will paddle further around the island until we come to Cape Wide and camp. 17 km.

Day 9 – After breakfast and our final pack we kayak to the Bay of Mršvanska where we end our kayaking journey. Lunch and a boat transfer to our hotel in Rab. Dinner. 4 km.

Day 10 – Group transfer to the airport and final farewells.

CLIMATE

Summers in Croatia are hot and dry, especially in July and August. The months of May and June are a little cooler – still shorts and T-shirt weather during the day at most times, with the possibility of occasional showers. Evenings can still be cool in May/June. The weather is generally settled but wind can be a factor.

ACCOMMODATION AND CAMPING

Rab: We will have simple twin-share bed and breakfast hotel accommodation for 2 nights in Rab at the Istra Hotel – Tel: +385 51 724 134. Web site www.hotel-istra.hr/orabu_en.php

Camping: We supply two-person tents, foam mats and communal camping equipment. You can either bring your own sleeping bag or rent one. If bringing your own sleeping bag, ensure it is compact to conserve space. Rental charge is Euro 20 for a sleeping bag. Please note the ground can be rocky so you should take that into consideration. You may choose to bring your own Thermarest. Please note that some public campgrounds can be basic, offering only cold-water showers.

TRIP ORGANISATION

Camping Segment

Our paddling days will start early to make the most of each day. It's a good idea to pack your dry-bag before breakfast, prepare your personal items for the day and take down your tent so that loading for departure can be organised.

The guides will also appreciate your assistance in other camp duties. We find that people joining our trips alone soon make friends.



Food

Our guides usually prepare meals in camp and your help is welcome. At some campsites we are able to eat local Croatian food at a nearby restaurant. Restaurant meals throughout the trip will be simple and provide variety and a taste of local cuisine.

We are happy to cater for vegetarians and other special dietary needs, please let us know at the time of booking your dietary requirements.

EXPEDITION STAFF

There will be two experienced kayak guides. Should you have any inquiries during the trip, feel free to ask your guides.

CONSERVATION

It has always been our motto that "we take only photographs and leave only footprints". We are keenly aware of the ecology of the areas we visit and try to limit our impact on them. We ask that each person take out everything they bring in, including sweet wrappers, batteries, etc.

PHOTOGRAPHY

We are paddling mainly in a salt-water environment and the delicate electronics in digital or film cameras can be damaged. You might consider a waterproof camera or a small plastic waterproof case or dry-bag with a supply of Silicon Packs. Ensure you have sufficient memory storage and batteries for a digital camera, as there is little opportunity to purchase batteries or access electricity during our kayak trip. If you are using a film camera it is wise to keep lenses to a minimum. One variable lens will reduce your load and the amount of your equipment that can be damaged! Low speed films are fine on the water but in the alleyways of a town some higher speed films are useful. We recommend all film be purchased and processed in your home country. If you are buying a new camera, consider a waterproof one and get it well before departure so you can practice with it. It is inconvenient to find fault with the camera during a trip.

MONEY MATTERS

Your tour cost includes:

- Bed and breakfast hotel accommodation in Rab on a twin share basis for the first and last night of the trip.
- Expedition kayaks, paddles, life jackets and safety equipment.
- 2-person tents and foam mats
- 20 litre watertight dry-bags for your personal gear while kayaking.
- Professional guides.
- All meals from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 10.
- Specified group airport transfers.

Your tour cost does not include:

- Any flights.
- Entry fees into historic sites.
- Items of a personal nature such as postage and laundry.
- Alcoholic beverages.
- Some bottled water during the trip
- Airport taxes.
- Travel insurance.
- Tips.
- Sleeping bags (these can be hired at an extra charge).
- Thermarests are not provided but can be a good idea.

MONEY TO BRING WITH YOU

There are ATM machines in the main centres and this is the most efficient way to obtain Croatian kuna. The kuna is tied to the Euro but is not much value outside Croatia so it is better to exchange small amounts at a time. Credit cards are accepted in larger stores or hotels. Traveller's cheques and cash can be changed at banks in the larger towns and cities but can be time consuming.

U.S. dollars and Euros are far easier to exchange than Australian dollars within Croatia, but if you are traveling to Europe before or after it is better to have Euros.

During the trip you will need money for alcohol, bottled water and soft drinks, entry fees to a few historical sites and any shopping you intend to do.

TIPPING

We recommend you put aside a little money for general tips, i.e. restaurants, porters.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

It is necessary to take out a personal insurance policy to cover yourself against sickness, accident, loss of baggage, trip cancellation and in the unlikely event that you need emergency evacuation by plane or helicopter due to illness or accident. Ensure you have read the policy thoroughly and are familiar with the claim process in case it becomes necessary to make an emergency claim.

We strongly recommend you take out insurance at the time of booking. Please supply us with the policy details (insurance company name and contact details and policy number) before the trip.

MEDICAL MATTERS

All participants are required to provide us with a medical questionnaire filled out completely and accurately. Please check with your doctor or medical centre whether you require any vaccinations or boosters. An expedition first aid kit is carried on the trip. We strongly recommend that you bring with you any required medicines and a small First Aid Kit for your own personal use. Due to the remoteness of the trip it is advisable to have a dental checkup before departure.

PASSPORT

Make sure that you have a signed passport and that its validity will extend to 6 months after the date of your return. If you are not an Australian citizen and are returning to Australia after your trip, make certain that you have the necessary re-entry permit from the Department of Immigration.

VISAS

For most visitors visas are not required for stays in Croatia of less than 90 days. Your passport may be checked at hotels as all tourists are registered.

WATER

Bottled water is readily available in towns and preferable to tap water that, although chlorinated, is not as safe. Water for the kayaking will be provided throughout the trip but you will have opportunities to buy extra if you wish. We recommend about 3 litres per day per person and will be able to restock with water every 2-3 days.

BAGGAGE ALLOWANCE

Free airline baggage allowance is generally 20 kg. – check with your airline. Any excess baggage charges are your responsibility and will be levied by the airline involved. Please make sure that ALL luggage items are clearly labeled with your name and address before checking them onto your flight. Please do not put any sharp items into carry on luggage as they will be confiscated.

EXCESS LUGGAGE

Luggage not needed on the kayak trip can be stored in our Rab hotel where we return on Day 9.

SECURITY

Before leaving home, photocopy your passport, airline ticket and make a note of your credit card and ATM card numbers in case you lose or misplace them. You should carry your passport on the kayak trip but could leave airline tickets with left luggage at the hotel in Rab. Theft is a consideration in Croatia (like at home) so it is always a good idea not to leave things unattended. Do not carry large amounts of cash with you and always be aware of what you are carrying, especially personal valuables like cameras, jewellery and watches. Do not display valuable items or leave them lying around in such a way that might tempt a thief. It is a good idea to use a money belt or neck wallet.

CLOTHING & EQUIPMENT

Carefully check through all essential items. The dress code overall in Croatia is modest, but it is more relaxed on the Adriatic coast.

Essential Items

The following checklist is a guideline for your trip. Contact us if you have any questions.

- Lightweight waterproof rain jacket
- 2 pairs of shorts and swimming gear
- 1 pair of sturdy sand shoes or running shoes or preferably a lightweight hiking boot
- Lightweight socks
- 1 pair of sport sandals (e.g. Teva or similar) or paddle booties
- 1 pair of lightweight, quick drying, full length trousers
- Lightweight long-sleeved shirt is recommended in camp for protection from insects
- Lightweight woolen jumper or fleece jacket
- 1 long sleeved thermal or polyester top is recommended while paddling for sun protection or warmth in rainy conditions. Lycra rash vest is also suitable.
- Wide-brimmed hat for protection from the sun is essential. Sun visors are inadequate. A hat with a stiff brim that will hold rigidity in a breeze, and a chinstrap to keep on in the wind. A scarf made from a light material such as silk, to protect your neck, is useful for sun protection.
- Small towel (a chamois towel is ideal)
- Minimal personal toiletries (biodegradable salt water soap may be desired)
- Good waterproof sun cream and lip balm, and Insect repellent (recommend RID).
- Sunglasses with a cord or string for attaching them to prevent loss
- **Lightweight and compact sleeping bag and inner sheet – sleeping bag can be hired for Euro 20 if required. Be sure to let us know if you require a sleeping bag.**
- Small torch and batteries
- A small daypack, bum bag or dry bag is good for holding things like sunscreen, glasses, etc. both for paddling and day walks.
- A small drybag is also useful for keeping a camera and valuables handy while paddling.
- A wetsuit vest is useful for snorkeling
- 1 or 2, one litre water bottles (the type used by cyclists are good and inexpensive)
- Lightweight cycling gloves can ease blistering if you have not paddled recently.
- Small blowup pillow or pillowcase, this takes up little room and easily stuffed.
- Snorkeling gear (mask and snorkel only to save space or just swimming goggles)

Optional Items

- Power points require a plug with two round pins
- Cards/games, book or magazine
- Lightweight clothesline
- Binoculars, camera –bring sufficient film, batteries, and storage cards for digital cameras
- Thermarest

END OF THE TRIP

The trip finishes in Rab after breakfast on Day 10. We can offer a group transfer to Zadar airport if catching a flight that day. Please allow enough time on this day if you are booking onward flights, a transfer from Rab to Zadar airport takes approximately 2 hours.

OTHER PLACES TO SEE IN CROATIA

It's worth considering extending your time in Croatia as there is a huge range of fascinating places to visit. We are compiling a list of options for you to consider.

DELAYS OR PROBLEMS

In case of last minute delays or problems, contact Southern Sea Ventures in Australia on +61 2 8901 3287.

SOUTHERN SEA VENTURES

HEAD OFFICE – SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

PO Box 641, St Ives, NSW 2075

Ph: (02) 8901 3287 Fx: (02) 8901 3297

International phone or fax inquiries: 61 2 8901 and the last four digits

Email: ssvtrips@southernseaventures.com

Website: www.southernseaventures.com

Amended AB 15/12/08

