

# SOUTHERN SEA VENTURES

## CROATIA –GOURMET

### 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.

This is a sea kayak trip with a difference. What better way to work up an appetite than to follow a gourmet trail by kayak! Great food and spectacular paddling are our goals on this new Croatian adventure in the Kvarner region. Our internationally renowned chef, Judd Hill and local Croatian expert, Jogi Matusan, combine to seek out the best food and most exciting kayaking in the Mediterranean. We will learn how to press olives, taste local cheeses and sample an outstanding array of wines.

Kayaking in a clear and turquoise sea, we explore caves, paddle under towering cliffs with Griffon vultures soaring overhead and visit ancient Roman ruins. The protected waters of Krk, 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, food tastings and a daily snorkel. Croatia's natural history surrounds us on this magical sea kayak and food extravaganza. We finish kayaking at the village of Beli before being transferring by boat back to Rab.

Designed for people with some paddling experience and an interest in good food and wine. This is a voyage of discovery **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. A once only trip, so don't miss it!

#### A QUICK ITINERARY

Day 1	Pick up at Zadar, transfer to Rab, overnight hotel.	D
Day 2	Visit olive presses, discover foods from Rab and forest hike.	BLD
Days 3-7	Paddling the gourmet trail.	BLD
Day 8	Paddle underneath cliffs, home to Griffon vultures.	BLD
Day 9	Finish kayaking, visit vulture research centre, hike.	
	Boat transfer to our Rab 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 2010 flight schedules are made available.



2. Mediteran Hotel in Zadar. Pick up will be early afternoon.
3. 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 – intermediate 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 recommend 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 dinner with traditional Croatian dishes. 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 may be possible, dependent on everyone's arrival time.

D...Hotel.

Day 2 – Breakfast at hotel. We'll explore the island of Rab, visit olive oil presses and olive tree plantations and hike through the Fruga forest. Tonight we camp in an oak tree forest and prepare for the paddling the next day.

BLD...Camping.

Day 3 – We transfer to our starting point at Pudarica and paddle along the east coast of Rab. Turquoise seas offer amazing contrast to the barren landscapes. We head to the bay of Ilo and our camp. Tonight is our Croatian cheese night with tastings from all over Dalmatia. The views to the distant Velebit mountains provide a great backdrop to dinner.

BLD...Camping. Paddling distance: 18 km

Day 4 – We continue along the north east side of the island passing the freshly proclaimed Geological park, exploring caves and paddling under high cliffs. We head for the island of Grgur for lunch and reach camp in the main port. Our likely company tonight will be the local deer – a good audience for our white wine tasting.

BLD...Camping. Paddling distance: 22 km

Day 5 – After breakfast we head across the channel to the rugged island of Prvich. We aim to circumnavigate the unsettled island and make acquaintance with the Griffon vultures nesting in cliffs overhead. Then it is time for another crossing over Senjska Vrata channel to the coast of Krk and the bay of St Nicholas. Red wine tastings or 'Croatian Black wine' is the theme for this evening.

BLD...Camping. Paddling distance: 22 km

Day 6 – We'll start the day in our usual style with breakfast, coffee and swimming. We paddle past numerous bays and beaches en route to the lighthouse on Cape Negrit and beyond. In the bay of Punat (well known for its olives) we'll visit the small island of Kosljun and the old Monastery. Here are some remarkably preserved collections from the 1500's. Then it is on to our camp.

BLD...Camping. Paddling distance: 22 km

Day 7 – We paddle to the old Roman town of Krk on the island Krk. After visiting the historical sights we'll continue paddling to the Island of Plavnik. Plavnik has its own unique historical ruins and our Croatian guide will entertain us with tales of old, over an olive tasting session at our camp in the oak forest.

BLD...Camping. Paddling distance: 16 km

Day 8 – Today is our longest paddling day so we have an early start. We paddle under the high cliffs looking up at the Griffon vultures before crossing the channel to reach the island of Cres. Paddling along the eastern shore, we stop at remote beaches for a swim and snorkel. Tonight, we camp under the village of Beli.

BLD...Camping. Paddling distance: 25 km

Day 9 –We finish our paddling today in Cres. Later in the morning, we visit the research and educational centre for the Protection of Nature in Beli. This world renowned rehabilitation centre for Griffon vultures is home to birds that have been injured. Then it's time to stretch the legs and enjoy a hike in the Tramuntana forest. Later in the afternoon, we transfer by boat back to the island and town of Rab. Our final celebratory meal will be held in a restaurant in Rab.

BLD...Hotel.

Day 10 –Group transfer to Zadar airport and final farewells. Trip concludes.

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## 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 two nights in Rab at the Istra Hotel – Tel: +385 51 724 134. Web site [www.hotel-istra.hr/orabu\\_en.php](http://www.hotel-istra.hr/orabu_en.php)  
Our office can book pre and post trip nights at the Hotel Mediteran in Zadar if required.  
Hotel Mediteran: website: [www.hotelmediteran-zd.hr](http://www.hotelmediteran-zd.hr)  
For an upmarket option in Zadar, contact Hotel Kolovare: Tel +385 232 11017,  
website: [www.hotel-kolovare.com](http://www.hotel-kolovare.com)

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 that the ground can be rocky so you should take that into consideration. You might like to bring your own Thermarest. Please note that some public campgrounds can be basic, offering only cold-water showers. We will have occasional access to electricity later in the trip.

## 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. On this gourmet trip we intend to sample Croatian regional foods and our chef will prepare some tantalising menus. We may be camping but you might consider preparing for this trip by dieting before it starts! We will be seeking out local culinary delicacies and at some campsites may be able to dine at a nearby restaurant, chosen for their speciality dishes. We guarantee you will not be hungry on this trip!

**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 13 Jun to breakfast on 22 Jun.
- 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 in restaurants outside of tastings that are supplied.
- 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 are recommended to bring.

## **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 it does not have much value outside Croatia, so 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, some 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 due to weather or other reasons 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, 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 during the kayaking 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 (highly recommended)**

#### END OF THE TRIP

The trip finishes in Rab after breakfast on 22 Jun. 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. Please contact our office for suggestions.

#### 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

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