

SOUTHERN SEA VENTURES

CROATIA –DALMATIAN ODYSSEY

16 DAY TRIP: 11 DAYS SEA KAYAKING, 1 DAY RIVER PADDLING, 2 DAYS HIKING

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.

Our trip along this section of the Dalmatian coast offers a smorgasbord of dramatic scenery and historical and cultural experiences. We'll explore ruins and forts from Illyrian and Roman times, small fishing villages and three different national parks. We paddle through a labyrinth of island jewels in Kornati National Park, hike in Paklencia National Park, paddle the deep canyon of the Zrmanja River and visit the spectacular waterfalls of Krka National Park.

Designed for people with some paddling experience, we paddle over 200 km from Rab to Skradin.

This is a voyage of exploration and our **longest kayak trip. The itinerary may be subject to some deviations depending on the weather conditions we encounter.** Overnight campsites include remote beaches, private islands and the occasional public campground.

The clear warm waters of the Adriatic combined with the spectacular landscape of Northern Croatia makes this an adventure not to be missed!

A QUICK ITINERARY

Day 1	Pick up at Zadar airport, transfer to Rab, hotel accommodation.	D
Days 2-6	Self contained sea-kayaking trip from Rab to Pag	BLD
Day 7	Hiking in Paklencia National Park, cave adventure	BLD
Day 8	Paddle the Zrmanja river	BLD
Day 9-12	Paddle through Kornati National Park	BLD
Day 13-14	Paddle Murter to Skradin	BLD
Day 15	Explore Krka National Park, farewell dinner	BLD
Day 16	Group transfer to Zadar airport is available.	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 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 a strong wind 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 but 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 16 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 kayaking, 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 and transferred from our Rab hotel to Skradin, where we finish. A tour of the old city of Rab will be adjusted to everyone's arrival time.

Day 2 – Excursion to the highest point on the Island of Rab with views of the entire Kvarner. We transfer to the town of Lopar where we will have a kayak briefing and adjust kayaks. Then it is time to get paddling! We'll have an easy day paddling along a coastline filled with sandy coves and beaches before camping in the Bay of Sahara.

Day 3 – We head towards the Modova Caves on the north side of the island. We keep a look out for Griffin Vultures as we paddle to the red sand bay of Mag, surrounded by limestone craters. We camp on a small beach with views of the distant peaks.

Day 4 – Paddle to Zavratica fjord (nature park), snorkel near a sunken war ship. After lunch we continue paddling to the Bay of Svetojanji on Pag Island and explore remains of fortifications dating from the 6th century. Beach camping. 18 km.

Day 5 – Paddle to Bay of Zigelien to meet our van for a short transfer to the Bay of Caska. This is the location of the old city of Pag which sunk into the sea after an earthquake in the 4th century. Returning to our kayaks we will continue paddling past pebble beaches and lime stone cliffs to our camp at Slana beach.

Day 6 – Paddle to the “new” renaissance city of Pag (established in the year 1443). After lunch and a tour of the town we will transfer to Paklencia National Park where we camp for two nights. Campground, electricity and clothes washing.

Day 7 – We leave our kayaks behind for a day of walking and cave exploring in Paklencia National Park. We will walk through deep canyons cut through Karstic limestone and then visit the stunning Modric Caves. Campground, electricity.

Day 8 – After an early breakfast we transfer to the Zrmanja river. This beautiful jewel cuts through a deep canyon and offers some delightful paddling. Aided by the current we use 2 person sit on top kayaks ideally suited to manoeuvre the many twists and turns along the river. Travertine barriers create stunning waterfalls and the lush surrounds provide a lovely contrast to the stark landscapes seen during our sea kayak trip. Transfer to our camp at Sukoshan, electricity. 15 km.

Day 9 – With the backdrop of the Velbit massif behind us we head towards the 150 islands that make up Kornati National Park. We cross several straits, skip between numerous islands, explore hidden bays and stop for the night on the island of Zut surrounded by olive trees. 18 km.

Day 10 – We start early today for one of our longer paddling days as we paddle from Zut to Levrnaka. We'll pass the Roman ruins of *villae rusticae* in Mala Proversa and then visit the salt lake, Lake Mir, in Telascica Nature Park. As we cruise through the islands we pass 170 metre high cliffs, explore the caves of Garmenjak and refresh with a few swims throughout the day. Camp on Levrnaka. Electricity. 24 km.

Day 11 – We paddle past the cliffs of Mali and Veli Rasip, stopping at several historical sites on our way to Ravni Zakan and camp. 20 km.

Day 12 – After breakfast we'll transfer by boat to the island of Murter with a short paddle on to camp. Electricity.

Day 13 – Slowly we make our way back towards the mainland paddling past the islands of Murter and the town of Tribunj where we'll have lunch. We head for Prvich, an original historical stone town. Restaurant dinner. Beach camping. 20 km.

Day 14 – Our longest paddling day so an early start this morning! Paddle to the historic town on Sibenik and have lunch in the old city. Carry on past the Sibenik bridge and Skradin Bridge up the channel of St Ante and the fortification of St Nikola from the 15th century. We enter the River Krka canyon and finish our sea kayak paddling at Skradin. We overnight in the hotel. 25 km.

Day 15 – After breakfast we visit the Krka National Park and spectacular waterfalls of Skradinski Buk. This karstic phenomenon is unique and the travertine barriers form hundreds of cascades and waterfalls. Our last day of swimming and a chance to reflect on this diverse Croatian adventure. Farewell dinner. Hotel, Skradin.

Day 16 – After breakfast a group transfer to Zadar airport is provided.

**Note: An alternative on this day is a transfer to Plitvice Lakes and return. Extra charge on request.

CLIMATE

Summers in Croatia are hot and dry, especially in July and August. The month of September is a little cooler – still shorts and T-shirt weather at most times during the day, with the possibility of occasional showers. In September it can get cooler in the evening. The weather is generally settled but wind can be a factor.

ACCOMMODATION AND CAMPING

Rab and Skradin: We will have simple twin-share bed and breakfast hotel accommodation. Our office can book pre and post trip nights at the Hotel Mediteran in Zadar if required. Hotel Mediteran : website: www.hotelmediteran-zd.hr
For an upmarket option, contact Hotel Kolovare: Tel +385 232 11017, website: 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, the ground is often rocky, sharp and very hard so you should take that into consideration. You may choose to bring your own Thermarest. We mix up our campsites spending 7 nights on wild beaches and interspersing this with five campgrounds to provide access to more facilities. Some public campgrounds can be basic, offering only cold-water showers.

TRIP ORGANISATION

We have built in occasional access to electricity, laundry and intermittent van and boat support to bring in fresh food during our kayak trip.

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.

On arrival in camp you will be expected to unload your own boats, and you and your partner will be responsible for your own tent or sleeping site. 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! 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 night of the trip.
- Bed and breakfast hotel accommodation in Skradin on a twin share basis for the last two nights 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 16.
- Specified group airport transfers.
- Entrance fees to National Parks

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 are a good idea 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 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. US 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

Any excess luggage that you do not take kayaking can be stored and transferred from the Rab hotel to where we finish in Skradin.

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
- 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 kayaking finishes in Skradin after breakfast on Day 16. 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 Skradin to Zadar takes approximately 1 hour.

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 recommendations.

DELAYS OR PROBLEMS

In case of last minute delays or problems, contact Southern Sea Ventures in Australia on +61 2 8901 3287. A guide contact in Croatia will be provided in your final trip voucher.

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