

Old Europe - New Vistas!

Slovenia and Croatia

September 15 – 25, 2010

We have a fantastic opportunity to see the best of Europe this fall – a specially designed tour encompassing the beautiful landscape of Slovenia, with its capital of Ljubljana and our return to a charming section of Croatia not often visited by American travelers – the Istrian Peninsula. This beautiful region of Croatia has been transformed by the occupation over the centuries by the Italians, so much so that a drive through this region looks as if you are visiting Tuscany. You'll see hillside towns, small family wineries, beautiful seaports, and Roman ruins – including a wonderfully preserved Roman amphitheater seating 23,000 persons in Pula, and still used to this day for concerts and outdoor events.

Our journey starts in Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia, a country rich in history, and steeped in natural beauty. Slovenia provides the bridge between German and Slavic cultures. Slovenia is one of the European Union's newest members, and has started to blossom in Europe's marketplace. Yet a stroll through Ljubljana's old city provides you with a glimpse of a past life here in the city, the Europe as it used to be many years earlier.

While we're there, we'll visit several gardens in the area, including one of Slovenia's most famous, the Volčji Potok arboretum, near Ljubljana. We'll spend a day at historic and beautiful Lake Bled. On the island in the middle of Lake Bled is the Assumption Church, which has a tradition of the groom carrying his bride up the 99 steps to the chapel as an omen of good luck, if he successfully completes the challenge!

And as we pass through Slovenia and head into Croatia, we'll stop at the border between the two countries, separated by the Kupa River. The Kupa is most often a mild stream but it provides a separation between these two country cousins. In Osilnica, we'll journey the backroads of Slovenia to enjoy lunch well off the beaten path, and have a visit with friends of the Arboretum, and learn more about day to day life in this remote section of Slovenia.

Once we reach Opatija, you can enjoy the splendor of this famous spa city, once the playground of the Hapsburg rulers and European nobility. A scant century or so ago, Opatija was the trendy place to see

and be seen in Europe. Our hotel there is a five-star property located right on the waterfront in Opatija, with beautiful views of its garden and the Adriatic shoreline. From Opatija, we'll visit the Istrian peninsula, from the Roman ruins at Pula to the seaport of Rovinj and the National Park at Briuni. On our return to Opatija in the afternoon, we'll stop at a local winery to sample and buy some of the best wines that Croatia has to offer.



Ljubljana

After our sojourn to Istria, we leave Opatija and travel inland towards the National Park at Plitvice Lakes. We've visited this park several times on past tours, and it has become a high point for many of our travelers. With its numerous lakes and waterfalls, it's no wonder that UNESCO has named Plitvice Lakes National Park as one of its Heritage Sites.

Our final stop in this great journey is in the capital of Croatia – Zagreb. Here you see outstanding Hapsburg architecture at its best. This charming city has beautiful churches, many museums and concert halls, a most enjoyable pedestrian zone in the center of the city, and an Upper Town with a spectacular view over the city and surrounding countryside. Zagreb is a hidden gem in the Balkans. Here we will make a return visit to view the University's Botanical Garden.

So make your plans now to join Peter Olin and his friends at the Arboretum on this wondrous journey to the land often overlooked by travelers from our area – a tour that you will never forget.

Tour Price: \$3,095

Tour cost is exclusive of airline taxes and fuel surcharges (estimated at \$400)
Prices are per person, based on double occupancy. Single supplement \$595 extra

Wednesday, September 15

Overnight flight from home city to Venice.

Thursday, September 16

Upon arrival we are met by our guide and motorcoach for the transfer to Ljubljana. After arrival at our hotel, we have a walking city tour of Slovenia's capital. We return to the hotel afterwards, where the balance of the day is at leisure. We have a welcome dinner this evening. Lunch is also included today. **L D**

Friday, September 17

This morning there is free time to explore Ljubljana on your own. After lunch we visit the Botanical Garden at the University of Ljubljana. The evening is at leisure. Dinner is on your own. **B**



Kupa River – the border where we have lunch

Saturday, September 18

Today we have a full day tour to Lake Bled, an idyllic lake nestled in the mountains north of Ljubljana. It is full of natural sites – waterfalls, ravines and caves, along with a castle and an island church. The church is a popular place for weddings. Bled Castle dates from the Middle Ages, and offers unforgettable views of the lake and the wider area of the Julian Alps. Lunch is included on our tour today. Return in the late afternoon to Ljubljana for overnight. Evening is at leisure. **B L**

Sunday, September 19

This morning we travel to the Volčji Potok Arboretum, located a short drive outside of Ljubljana. We'll spend the morning here. The Arboretum has a delightful restaurant on site, for you to enjoy your lunch (on your own). In the afternoon we'll visit a nearby winery and sample some Slovenian wine before we return to Ljubljana in the late afternoon. **B**

Monday, September 20

After breakfast we leave Ljubljana and drive towards Croatia. En route, we'll stop along the Slovenia-Croatia border for lunch. The southern region of Slovenia is very scenic, with picturesque forests and mountains. We'll stop in Osilnica, just across the river from Croatia, where we have friends who will host us for lunch. Afterwards we'll continue on through the mountains of Croatia to Opatija, at the northern end of the Adriatic Sea. After check in at the hotel, the balance of the day is at leisure. Dinner is on your own tonight. **B L**

Tuesday, September 21

Today we explore the Istrian peninsula, nestled at the northern end of the Adriatic Sea. This area contains some of the most sought-after holiday destinations in

Europe. The coast is spectacular and the towns and cities are fascinating. We'll visit one of Croatia's most famous National Parks, Brijuni, along with the Roman city of Pula, and the seaport of Rovinj on our tour today. We'll enjoy lunch on Brijuni. This area is steeped in Roman history, as it became part of the Roman Empire around 42 B.C. There are many traces of Roman civilization on the peninsula, including the well-preserved amphitheater of Pula, dating from the 1st century A.D. On our return to Opatija, we'll stop at one of the many wineries on the peninsula to sample some of Croatia's finest wines. **B L**

Wednesday, September 22

We leave Opatija today and journey across the heart of Croatia to arrive at the National Park of Plitvice, another of Croatia's UNESCO Heritage sites, and a past favorite of Arboretum travelers on previous tours. Plitvice Lakes contains 16 lakes and visitors can move around the park by following paths along the shore or using footbridges to view the numerous waterfalls, flora and fauna located within the park. We'll enjoy lunch at the restaurant Lička Kuča, serving regional specialties from the grill. After our visit here, we drive north to Zagreb, where we'll spend our final nights in Croatia. After check-in at our hotel, the balance of the day is free to explore Zagreb on your own. **B L**



Lake Bled

Thursday, September 23

After breakfast we have a walking tour of Zagreb, to see the Upper Town and the majestic St. Stephen's Cathedral, along with the famous Dolac market, where goods from the region are sold by the local farmers – flowers, fruits and vegetable are all on colorful display here. After lunch (included) we'll visit the Botanical Garden of Zagreb, where the head gardener will showcase this attractive city garden and give us the history of the garden. After our visit here, we return to our hotel, where the balance of the day is at leisure. Dinner is on your own tonight. **B L**

Friday, September 24

Today is a free day in Zagreb, and you are free to shop for last minute souvenirs, or visit one of the many great museums located in this city. This evening we have our farewell dinner at a local restaurant and say farewell to this wonderful country. **B D**

Saturday, September 25

After breakfast today we are taken by coach to the Zagreb Airport for our return flights home. **B**

B = Breakfast; L = Lunch; D = Dinner;

This outstanding value includes:

- 9 nights deluxe hotel accommodation
- Buffet Breakfast daily
- Welcome and farewell dinner
- Six lunches
- Sightseeing as indicated in the itinerary
- All taxes and service charges while on tour
- Escorted by Peter Olin

Not included in the tour

- Airline taxes and fuel surcharges
- Gratuities to driver and guide
- Personal expenditures—laundry, phone, etc.

Deposit due with booking: \$500 per person

Final payment is due August 1, 2010

For information or to register , call 612-724-1915 or e-mail us at: gladtotravel@earthlink.net

Note: Tour price based on minimum of 20 passengers traveling on the tour. We reserve the right to reprice the tour should the number fall below 20 passengers.



Opatija



Plitvice Lakes National Park



The Arboretum Volčji Potok near Ljubljana



Brijuni National Park



St. Mark's Church – Zagreb



Amphitheater in Pula