

## Croatia Mountain Trek



Duration: 5 days

The Istria Peninsula in northern Croatia is relatively unknown, a hidden Tuscany-like gem which feels a world away from the well-touristed Adriatic coast to the south.

With spectacular, diverse scenery of lush green forested hills and limestone mountain peaks, vineyards and olive groves, meandering rivers, untouched stone villages and medieval hilltop towns, the region offers rich rewards for those who like to trek away from the crowds. Following the Istria Mountain Trail across the peninsula, we trek from the wooded hills around Buzet east into Učka National Park, where we crest three mountain peaks, culminating in fabulous views over the entire region from the rocky summit of Mount Učka.

This is a challenging trek, with some long days and hilly terrain, but provides a memorable and beautiful experience in a short bite-sized adventure!

### DETAILED ITINERARY

#### Day 1: Fly from UK; transfer to Buzet

We arrive into the region and transfer to the characterful town of Buzet, known for its production of local grappa (schnapps). There should be time to explore the old town, and visit the local brewery for a chance to sample the different grappa flavours! Night hotel.

Drive approx. 2 hours

*NB: We do not always fly into the same airport for this challenge; Venice (Italy), Ljubljana (Slovenia), Trieste (Italy) and Pula (Croatia) are all suitable options. Group flight details will be confirmed nearer the time.*

#### Day 2: Buzet – Oprtalj – Buzet

A 30-minute drive takes us to Oprtalj, a small and very picturesque town marking the start of the Istrian Mountain Trail. Our trek starts fairly gently on undulating wooded trails, passing small villages and farmland before climbing to a wonderful viewpoint over the River Mirna, with vistas stretching to Mount Učka. We then pass the imposing ruins of Pietrapelosa castle as we head downhill into the valley. After more undulating trails passing small villages, we enjoy beautiful views across to Buzet, perched picturesquely on a forested hilltop, and return there for the night. Night hotel.

Trek approx. 6-7 hours

#### Day 3: Buzet – Hum – Buzet

A long but absolutely beautiful day awaits! Walking alongside the river, dwarfed by sheer rock faces, we walk through woodland, gradually gaining height, and pass lakes and waterfalls. We pass an old abandoned village with traditional Istrian stone houses,

## DETAILED ITINERARY (cont.)

and an old watermill beside natural pools, before reaching Hum for lunch. Officially listed as the worlds' smallest town, Hum is also known for its grappa and is our mid-way point. We continue climbing through the wooded valley to a stunning viewpoint, before heading back to Buzet on a scenic, undulating path passing yet more waterfalls. Night hotel.

**Trek approx. 8-10 hours**

### Day 4: Buzet – Učka – Lovran

A half-hour drive takes us to Brgudac, where we fill our bottles from the village's wooden troughs, always brimming with pure spring water. We set off uphill through oak forests onto a mountainous plateau and onto Korita Peak (1050m); once above the treeline we can enjoy wonderful views of the Učka massif. We continue over the undulating karst plateau to the bare rocky peak of Veliki Planik (1272m), the highest point on the Ćićarija plateau. Mesmerising views over Central Istria are our just reward for this more strenuous haul. Descending to a saddle between the mountains, we are spurred on by fabulous sea views to Mount Učka – our highest point at 1401m. The limestone massif dominates the surrounding countryside and features heavily in local folk-lore. It's a long haul to the top, but it's possible to see the Alps to the north and the Adriatic islands to the south, as well as all over Istria: a fitting end to our trek! After soaking up the views, we drive to Lovran, a lovely historic town on the east coast of the peninsula. Night hotel.

**Trek approx. 7-8 hours**

### Day 5: Transfer to airport; fly to UK

After breakfast we transfer back to the airport for our flight home.

*(Lunch not included if not in-flight)*

*Discover Adventure reserves the right to change the route or itinerary for safety reasons should local conditions dictate.*

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## CHALLENGE GRADING

Trips are graded Yellow, Orange or Red, in increasing level of challenge. This trek lies within the **Yellow** range.

The grade is determined by factors such as terrain, distance, climate, altitude, etc. Each colour grade has a **spectrum** which reflects the difficulty of these factors; trip duration, accommodation and living conditions are also taken into account.

The Challenge Factor icon shows the most challenging aspect – an extra-long day, which on this hilly terrain is tough.

The grade reflects the overall trip; some sections will feel more challenging than others. Unusual weather conditions also have a significant impact, and not all people are tested by the same aspects.