

# Balkan Escape

An 8-day Regional Explorer trip  
Nov. 2019 – March 2020 departures



*Immerse yourself in the cultural diversity and scenic beauty of the Balkans while visiting lesser-known but beautiful cities of Croatia and Slovenia in this intriguing tour! Stay 2-nights in Zagreb, the vibrant capital city of Croatia filled with culture and history. Enjoy 2-nights in Opatija a beautiful seaside town. Experience Ljubljana whose culture and cuisine are second to none and visit Bled, a hidden jewel with incredible scenery, culture and history!*

## **Day 1: Arrive Zagreb (2 nights)**

Immerse yourself in the cultural diversity and scenic beauty of the Balkans, starting your journey in the Croatian capital, Zagreb. Spend your day wandering through the Old Town on your own before joining your Travel Director and fellow travelers this evening for a Welcome Reception and an orientation drive. Meals: Welcome Reception  
Hotel: Westin

## **Day 2: Zagreb Sightseeing & At Leisure**

Join a Local Specialist this morning for a sightseeing tour through the paved squares and steep alleyways of Zagreb. Explore the city's rich medieval heritage and see such sites as the Cathedral on Kaptol, the Archbishop's Palace and St. Mark's Church, with its vividly colored tiled roof. You'll have the rest of the day to explore the city at leisure. Stroll along the romantic promenades of Strossmatre, people-watch at Ban Jelačić Square or climb up Lotrščak Tower for views of the city. Perhaps join an Optional Experience to the birthplace of iconic leader Tito and enjoy a delicious meal of regional specialities with magnificent views of the Croatian countryside. Meals: Breakfast

## **Day 3: Zagreb – Opatija (2-nights)**

A leisurely start to our day sees us drive south towards the Kvarner Gulf and the seaside promenades of Opatija. Sit back and watch the meadows, forests and farmlands roll past - a lush countryside dotted with terracotta-roofed villages and castles as you journey to Croatia's exquisite Istrian Peninsula. Views of beautiful parks and elegant villas greet you as you arrive, a testament to Opatija's Austro-Hungarian

heritage. This evening you'll join your travel companions for dinner at your hotel. Meals: Breakfast, Dinner  
Hotel: Grand Adriatic

**Day 4: Opatja Free Day - Excursion to Rovinj**

For a bit of Venetian flair, we travel to the Croatian fishing port of Rovinj this morning. Here we'll join a Local Specialist and wander through its Old Town to see such sights as the Baroque St. Euphemia Cathedral with its square campanile. We'll 'Dive into Culture' and savor the flavors of the region's famous white truffles before returning to Opatija for some time to explore on our own. See the statuesque nymph, her hand outstretched to cradle a seagull and admire the belle-époque architecture which once attracted members of Europe's high society. Meals: Breakfast

**Day 5: Opatja - Ljubljana - Bled (2-nights)**

We head north to the enchanting Slovenian capital of Ljubljana today. A Local Specialist will reveal the stories behind many of the city's iconic sights including the Opera House, Cathedral, National Museum, Three Bridges Square and Castle, from where you can enjoy spectacular views of the city. Good food and good company are guaranteed as we 'Connect With Locals' over a memorable Be My Guest lunch with a local Slovenian family. Our journey continues to Bled in the Julian Alps, where we'll spend the next two nights in romantic lakeside surrounds. Dinner is at our hotel tonight.

Meals: Breakfast, Be My Guest Dinner

Hotel: Rikli Balance

**Day 6: Bled Free Day**

The day is yours to explore at your leisure. Spend the day admiring your pristine surrounds. Take an invigorating walk along the lake shore for better views of Bled Castle which clings dramatically to a cliff or indulge in a slice of the local kremšnita cake after an ice-skating session if the lake has frozen over. Consider joining an Optional Experience to Slovenia's largest glacier lake or visit the extensive maze of underground caves at Postojna. Meals: Breakfast

**Day 7: Bled - Zagreb**

We leave our dazzling natural surrounds behind, returning to Zagreb where we end our journey. Slovenia's forests give way to the pastoral landscapes of central Croatia. Tonight, we join our fellow travelers for a celebratory Farewell Dinner and say a fond živjeli to lasting memories.

Meals: Breakfast, Farewell Dinner

Hotel: Westin

**Day 8: Depart Zagreb**

Our time together comes to an end after breakfast. We bid new friends goodbye and transfer to the airport for our return home. Meals:  
Breakfast

**Sightseeing Highlights:**

- CITY TOUR of Zagreb, Rovinj and Ljubljana
- ORIENTATION of Opatija and Bled
- VIEW the Cathedral, the Archbishop's Palace and St Mark's Church in Zagreb, the Opera House, Cathedral, National Museum, Three Bridges Square and Castle in Ljubljana
- SEE the Baroque St. Euphemia Cathedral in Rovinj

**What's Included:**

- Audio Headsets for flexible sightseeing
- Daily breakfast and an average of 50% of evening meals
- Luxury air-conditioned coach with WiFi in most countries or alternative transportation (such as rail journeys)
- Cherry-picked hotels, all tried and trusted
- Optional Experiences and free time
- All portorage and restaurant gratuities
- Must-see sightseeing and surprise extras
- An expert Travel Director and professional Driver
- All hotel tips, charges and local taxes
- Hand-picked Trip Highlights
- VIP entry to many sights

Call Thomas Travel at 801-266-2775 / 800-255-3230 for departure dates and availability.