



ADVENTURES  
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## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE VIA DINARICA

### Trip Summary

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- Hiking the highlights of Via Dinarica in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro, still one of the least visited areas in Europe
- Seeing spectacular limestone peaks, beautiful Adriatic coast, glacier lakes, amazing views, colorful wildflowers, medieval villages, and a gracious culture and people
- Rafting down the spectacular Tara River
- Hiking to the highest peaks in Bosnia and Montenegro
- Visiting Mostar and Sarajevo, two of the Balkans' most beautiful cities

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## TRIP AT A GLANCE

<b>Location:</b>	Croatia, Montenegro, and Bosnia
<b>Activities:</b>	Hiking
<b>Arrive:</b>	5 p.m. in the lobby of our hotel in Zagreb, Croatia on Day 1
<b>Depart:</b>	Depart any time from the Sarajevo, BiH (SJJ) airport on the last day

### Trip Overview

The Via Dinarica trail spans across eight different countries in the western Balkans; a region once steeped in conflict. Now, this trail network crosses soaring limestone peaks, glimmering alpine lakes, and dreamy pastoral meadows, amalgamating diverse cultures, languages, and religions. Hiking the Via Dinarica, Outside Magazine's Best New Trail in 2014, should be number one on your list, too. We'll hike the highlights in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro. The Balkans are still relatively quiet when it comes to mass tourism, so you have the amazing opportunity to indulge in the sublime serenity with us. It's rugged, wild, and truly magical. You'll explore remote villages, medieval towns, and vibrant cities along the Balkan peninsula, trying local cuisine and learning about the cultures along the way.

### Rating

This trip is designed for women in excellent physical condition who have prior hiking experience and are excited to experience an ambitious and new long trail. While the level of activity varies each day, you should be able to hike up to 8 hours on mountain trails with elevation gain and loss of 2500-3000 feet while carrying a daypack weighing about 15 pounds. Altitude is not a problem here. There is minor scrambling and some exposure (trails with a drop off no one side); women with significant fear of heights should call the office before registering. This trip is rated 5, which is our highest rating and requires aerobic and endurance conditioning prior to beginning the trip.

**Rating:** 1 2 3 4 **[5]**

### What's Included

- A Bosnian English-speaking mountain guide and an AGC guide (If there are fewer than 8 on the trip, there will not be an AGC guide)
- 2 nights in a mountain hut or hostel and 10 nights double occupancy in small hotels and pensions
- All meals from dinner on first night to breakfast on last morning with the exception of one lunch. A glass of beer, wine, soda or water is included at dinners.
- All activities on the itinerary including city tours, wine and food tasting in Mostar
- All transportation during the trip in a private air-conditioned minibus
- Group transport from the Zagreb, Croatia airport on June 23
- Tips for city guides and bus drivers

**What's not included:** International airfare, airport transfer outside the group transfer on Day 1, guide gratuities, mandatory emergency evacuation insurance, transportation to Sarajevo (SJJ) airport on Day 13.

**Please note:** Mandatory Emergency Evacuation insurance is required for this trip. Since this is an adventurous trip in a remote place, everyone is required to have post departure benefits which include emergency medical, evacuation and expatriation clauses. If you purchase complete trip insurance, these items are automatically included in your policy.

If you do not purchase complete trip insurance, these items can be purchased separately either through your personal insurance company, adventure insurance online companies and through the company that we recommend " Travelex. If using Travelex for this insurance as a separate policy, please use \$1.00 for the trip cost when filling out their form. This will give you the post departure benefits required without insuring the entire trip. The website for checking out Travelex is <http://www.travelex-insurance.com/> and the location code to identify AGC is 20-0016. Your program director will request policy numbers prior to travel.

## OUR ITINERARY

Below is the itinerary we have planned for the trip. As is true on any adventure travel trip, plans for any specific day may be modified due to weather considerations, unforeseen circumstances, new opportunities, and group interests.

### DAY 1

Arrive in Zagreb, Croatia. We will meet you at the airport at 3 p.m. for transfer to our hotel for introductions and overview of our trip before our welcome dinner in Zagreb. If you arrive earlier, we can arrange a private transfer (\$55 for 1 - 3 people). Zagreb is a beautiful and interesting city and well worth coming a day early if you have the time (not to mention that it will help with jetlag).

Overnight Hotel Central (D)

### DAY 2

Our adventure begins in Northern Velebit National Park. Velebit is the largest range of mountains in Croatia and we start our exploration on the Premuzic Trail. After our 3.5 hour transfer this morning to Zavizan Hut, we spend our first day hiking past wide mountain pastures, karst valleys, and towering peaks. Built in 1931 and still an engineering marvel, the Premuzic Trail traverses the main ridge of Velebit with almost non-stop views of the Adriatic below. The Alan Shepherd Houses - our home for the night, with stunning views of the sea and the islands - are situated at the foot of the Alancic peak. Luckily, we carried just our daypacks today and our luggage is waiting for us at the hut. After dinner, we may wander the nearby area, with visible remains of stone walls, old shepherd's summer huts, animal shelters, and rainwater cisterns. This is Mirovo, which was one of the largest seasonal settlements on Velebit.

Hiking: 10 miles, 6 - 7 hours. Elevation gain: 1,230 feet. Overnight: Alan Mountain Hut (B, L, D)

### DAY 3

Today we continue following the Premuzic Trail and the challenging route of the Velebit Hiking Trail. We're rewarded by impressive views of the sea, with islands of Rab and Pag clearly visible. We hike to Satorina, the highest mountain in this area (5,324 feet) with vistas of surrounding mountains and the Adriatic Sea.

Continuing below Satorina and Matijevic brijeg, there is a range of abandoned limestone karst fields, which were important source of livestock farming until the mid-20th century. Our hike is quite challenging today and we'll look forward to arriving at Kugina kuca. Our van will meet us for the 30-minute drive to Hostel Baske Ostarjie where our luggage and a delicious dinner await us.

Hiking: 12.2 miles, 7-8 hours. Elevation gain: 2,720 feet. Overnight: Hostel Baske Ostarjie (B,L,D)

#### DAY 4

Alas, this is our final day hiking in Croatia, but it does not disappoint. After a short transfer we start a beautiful circular hike. We'll discover the geomorphological beauties of Dabarski Kukovi area, including an ascent of Visibaba peak (3810 feet), offering amazing panoramas to the Northern Dalmatia coast. The hike ends at Ravni Dabar, where we meet our van and luggage for an hour and a half scenic coastal drive to Starigrad Paklenica, Croatia. This is a village and small port on the Adriatic coast where the mountains seemingly slip into the sea. It's a perfect place to take a dip in the sparkling blue waters and sample freshly caught fish, wine, olive oil, and bread. Often there is live music for a festive evening, if we still have energy.

Hiking 12 miles, 6 - 7 hours. Elevation gain: 2,100 feet. Overnight: Hotel Vicko, Starigrad (B, L, D)

#### DAY 5

After the last three days of strenuous hiking, we'll enjoy a day of giving our legs a break. Our destination today is Mostar in Bosnia i Hercegovina (BiH). A 4-hour drive brings us to the middle of the former Yugoslavia which lies at the heart of the Dinaric Alps. We'll take a city walking tour of Mostar, famous for its beautiful historic Ottoman-style bridge, which was destroyed in the war. A significant portion of the city has been rebuilt, and this formerly war-torn city is once again a lively destination.

For dinner tonight, we sample local Herzegovinan wine and food at "Okusi Hercegovinu," a farmer's cooperative which was created by efforts of a group of enthusiasts from Herzegovina with the aim of preserving traditional agri-food and craft products, and promotion of the territory Herzegovina. The Association has enabled many farmers and artisans from the area of Herzegovina to improve their working environment and the standard of production.

Overnight Hotel Almira (B, L, D)

#### DAY 6

Today we have a more leisurely morning, before traveling about 45 minutes to the Diva Grabovica Valley. This valley, home to several rare endemic trees and wildflowers, is one of the wildest and most beautiful areas on the Balkan peninsula. We'll hike on one of King Karadjordjevic's old hunting trails, climbing through the ancient forests of Cvrstica Mountain to Zljeb. Starting from the valley of Diva Grabovica, it's a fairly steep climb at times, but truly stunning and refreshing. We'll climb 2.5 hours before reaching our destination, a perch overlooking the largest rock face on the Balkan Peninsula, where we can enjoy a picnic lunch. The peaks of Cvrstica tower around us in every direction from this point. This is a great way to spend the day: spectacular views with a refreshing hike fit for a king, but very much for queens too! After the hike we continue our journey to Sarajevo, a drive of about 1.5 hours, where we spend the next two nights.

Hiking : 6 miles, 5 - 6 hours. Elevation gain: 2400 feet. Overnight: Pension Kandilj (B, L, D)

#### DAY 7

This morning we have a guided tour of Sarajevo, one of the most historically interesting and varied cities in Europe. It is a place where the Western and Eastern Roman Empire split and the city is famous for its historic religious diversity, with practitioners of Islam, Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Judaism coexisting here for centuries. Sarajevo has been both an example of historical turbulence and the clash of civilizations, as well as a beacon of hope for peace and tolerance through multi-cultural integration. We have a free afternoon to continue exploring on our own or perhaps relax with a good book, before meeting up for dinner at traditional Bosnian restaurant.

Overnight Sarajevo Pension Kandilj (B, D)

## DAY 8

Today we head to Sutjeska National Park, the oldest park and one of the two last remaining primeval forests in Europe. After dropping our luggage off at our hotel in Tjentiste, we'll drive for an hour to our hike near Donje Bare Lake. Sometimes referred to as the Yosemite of the Balkans, because of its stunning scenery and pristine habitats, the park is also famous as the location of the Battle of the Sutjeska in 1943 during World War II. Our hike is a loop, first to the tranquil lake of Donje Bare and then continuing through a beech forest and open mountainous terrain to the summit of Ugljesin Peak (6000 feet), for one of the best panoramic views of the Zelengora peaks and the rock-face wall of Volujak. We continue the stunning circuit back to Gornje Bare lake via the Tovarnica ridge with Bosnia's highest peak a constant companion on the horizon.

Hiking 5.6 miles, 3 - 4 hours. Elevation gain: 1,280 feet. Overnight Hotel Mladost (B, L, D)

## DAY 9

Today is the most challenging hike of the trip: Maglic Mountain (7,828 feet), the highest peak of Bosnia & Herzegovina! We'll keep a look out for wildlife on our four-hour ascent: bear, chamois (a goat-antelope species), boar, wolf, pine marten, and mink marten, wild cat, fox, and wild goats live in the park. Step by step we climb above the surrounding peaks on the well-maintained mountain trail with some steep cliffs, occasionally using chains for extra protection (not recommended if you suffer from vertigo.) Our reward at the summit is a break for lunch and breathtaking views over Montenegro and heart-shaped Trnovacko Lake. Dinner tonight is at a small local family restaurant where most of the food is grown and served by the wife and cooked by the husband.

Hiking: 9 miles, 9 - 10 hours. Elevation gain: 3,700 feet. Overnight at Hotel Mladost (B, L, D)

## DAY 10

Today we travel to Zabljak, a high mountain village in Montenegro, and our home for the next two nights. After a 4-hour drive, we'll have time to drop our bags at the hotel and pick up some picnic food for lunch at the Crno Jezero (Black Lake) in nearby Durmitor National Park. Compared to yesterday, we'll have a mellow day hike around the Crno Jezero, dominated by the rocky peaks of Durmitor on one side and deep forest on the other. Despite the name, its waters take on a variety of colors throughout the day.

Hiking: 3.7 miles, 2 - 3 hours. Elevation gain: 400. Overnight Hotel Soa, Zabljak (B, L, D)

## DAY 11

This may be the trip's most beautiful hike! We head back to Durmitor National Park for a climb up to the ridge between Lucin Peak (7860 feet) and Montenegro's highest peak, Bobotov Kuk (8,277 feet). You can choose to stay here or to continue up the challenging ridge to the top of Bobotov Kuk. Both have breathtaking views of the surrounding peaks and valleys - there are 48 peaks in the park - and on a clear day you can see all the way to the Adriatic Sea. After our climb we return to Zabljak.

Hiking: to the ridge 7.5 miles, 5-6 hours. Elevation gain: 1,920 feet. OR Bobotov Kuk 8.5 miles, 6 - 7 hours. Elevation gain: 2,500 feet. Overnight Hotel Soa (B, L, D)

## DAY 12

It's hard to leave Durmitor but it's time to head back to Sarajevo. On our way back we'll stop for a thrilling raft trip on the Tara River. We paddle through the deepest river canyon in Europe with 3,000 feet canyon walls rising above the stunning river wilderness area. After our adventure, we continue back to Sarajevo for a festive farewell dinner and celebration of our trip through the Balkans.

Rafting: 2 to 3 hours of rafting class II-IV rapids. Overnight Sarajevo Pension Kandilj (B, L, D)

## DAY 13

What a challenge this has been! We leave satisfied in knowing not only that we have challenged ourselves, but that, simply by hiking on the Via Dinarica at this early stage, we have contributed to its development and to the development of many areas that need and welcome tourism. But now it's time to bid farewell and to go home with new tales of adventure. Hotel reception will help you organize a taxi to the international airport (about 20 minutes away) to fly home or to continue on your travels.

(B)

## ADDITIONAL TRIP INFORMATION

### Getting There

PLEASE NOTE: This trip begins in Zagreb and ends in Sarajevo. Please plan to fly into Zagreb, Croatia (ZAG) airport on Day 1. There will be one group transfer at 3 p.m. If you prefer to arrive earlier, private transfers will be available for an additional cost. The Departure on Day 13 is out of the Sarajevo (SJJ) airport.

If you would like assistance with airfare, we recommend contacting our AirDesk Partner, [Exito Travel](#). Start by submitting this [form](#). Just fill in your dates and destinations, including any additional notes about preferred carriers, class of service, possible stopovers, etc., and an agent will typically respond via email within a few hours. If you prefer to call, the number is 800-655-4053; be sure to tell them you are traveling with Adventures in Good Company.

Please note: Most of the international airlines are in-network for Exito, so they do not charge extra for their services (and often have access to discounted rates). When necessary, processing fees out-of-network carriers are minimal at around \$35-\$50 per ticket.

### Accommodations

With the exception of our mountain section in Croatia, we will be staying in double occupancy rooms with ensuite bathrooms as detailed in the itinerary. During the mountain section in Croatia we will be staying in 2 mountain huts with shared accommodations and facilities.

## Travel Insurance

We recommend that you purchase a travel protection plan to help protect you and your travel investment against the unexpected. For your convenience, we offer travel protection through Travelex Insurance Services. For more information on the available plans or to enroll, visit [www.travelexinsurance.com](http://www.travelexinsurance.com) or call 1-800-228-9792 and reference location number 06-0331.

Travelex Insurance Services, Inc CA Agency License #0D10209. All products listed are underwritten by, Berkshire Hathaway Specialty Insurance Company, NAIC #22276.

## CANCELLATION POLICY

Cancellation charges reflect the many expenses Adventures in Good Company cannot recover if you cancel, even if you must do so due to illness, injury, or personal emergencies. These fees are not meant to be punitive. The charges made reflect the expenses Adventures in Good Company has incurred in administering your reservation and planning for your participation. We recognize that the majority of those who cancel their reservations do so out of necessity. Please note that we do not make any refunds for any unused portion of your trip, not arriving, arriving late, or leaving the trip early.

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