

Brilliant BALKANS



TRAVEL CLUB
travel without judgement

22 DAYS | 21 NIGHTS

HI THERE



CLUBBERS!

G&T'S 'BRILLIANT BALKANS'

THE BEST PARTS OF EUROPE ARE THOSE LESS TRAVELLED

This time G&T are discovering The Balkans. The 11 countries that are considered to make up The Balkans are **Albania**, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, **Croatia**, Kosovo, **Montenegro**, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, and Slovenia.

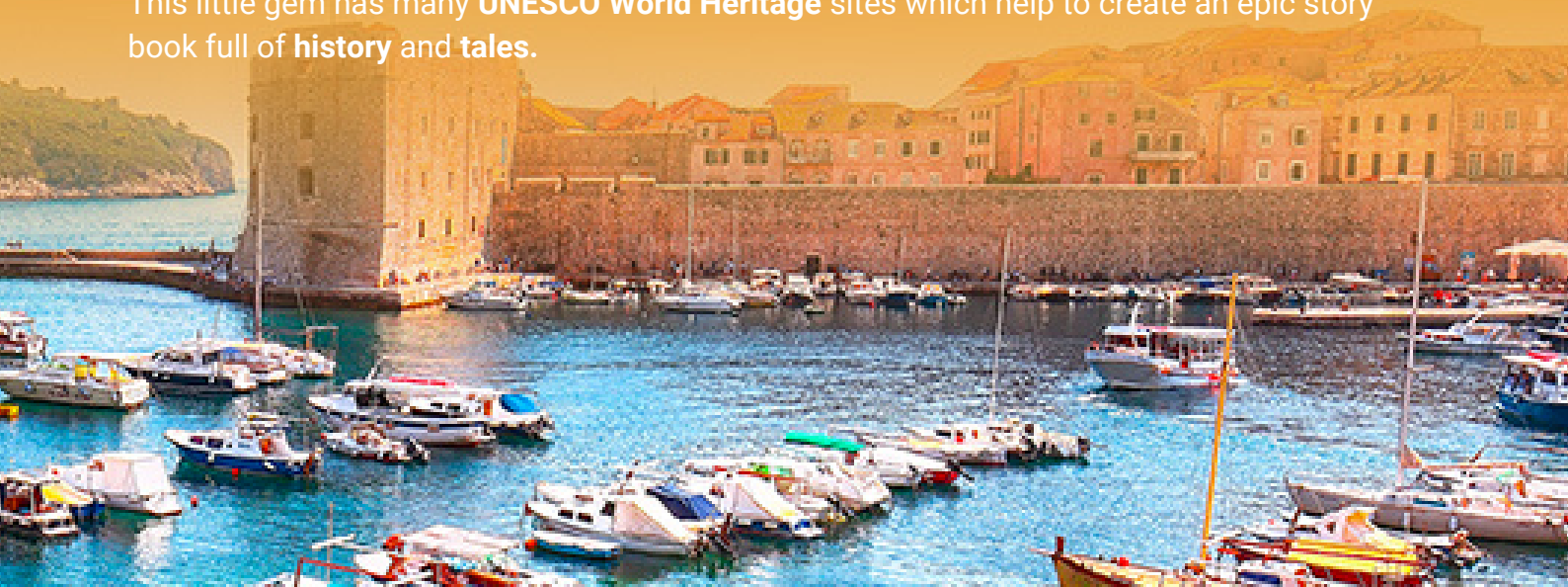
To get the full experience G&T have split our time between 3 countries. We have chosen Albania, Montenegro and Croatia in that order as the best combination to collectively visit. All 3 countries have their very **own identity** and **rhythm**, cultural **charm** and **history**. The fact that they share a region makes it very easy to travel between them all with little fuss.

Did you know that Balkanization is the fragmentation of larger sovereign countries or regions into smaller, often ethnically similar, countries or regions.

This **22-day** adventure is a **Premium Luxury Tour** taking advantage of the best located hotels and lodges throughout. **Coastal overnight stops** are seaside with ocean views, Inland overnights are right in the mountainous **countryside**, and **city stops** are right in the middle of the action. There are plenty of old mid-range hotels but our high-end hotels etc are hard to get so we have locked in 13 rooms for G&T Travel Club.

*You can fly into Albania from many European cities or from Istanbul if you are **linking this tour with our 'Timeless Turkey'** Therefore, we are starting in Albania which borders with Montenegro, then Croatia is a short drive around the coast from Montenegro.*

Albania, one of the smallest and least developed countries in Europe, offers a **unique and genuine travel experience**. The Albanian **Riviera** both pristine and unspoilt overlooks the **Adriatic Sea** as the **Albanian Alps** behind link up to make this one jaw-dropping destination. Almost three-quarters of the country is mountainous and amazingly unpopulated. This along with **300 days of sunshine** creates a nature lovers paradise. This little gem has many **UNESCO World Heritage** sites which help to create an epic story book full of **history** and **tales**.





Montenegro has a tranquil calm **Mediterranean** feel which seems confusing as it shares a **Switzerland** like snowy peak backdrop. Places like Perast look like a little chunk of Venice while Boka Bay holds its own as the most southern **European Fjord**.

Montenegro packs most of its jewels into a very small area so you can appreciate the **sweeping gorges** and **cascading waterfalls** all surrounded by **lush forests** and **pristine lakes**. The cuisine is typically southern European with all the **freshness of the 'Med'** along with some traditional **culinary surprises**.

Croatia, where the sunset is much more than just a picture. Much of the **coast faces west** so there are plenty of places where you can enjoy the **unforgettable sunsets**. Some say the most beautiful in the world! **Exceptional local wine** and amazing **gastronomy** will surely entice you to enjoy a meal as the sun sets. **Rich** in cultural and historical heritage the **small medieval towns** with narrow winding streets share a **unique** and **turbulent history**. The national and **cultural treasures** which are visible on almost every corner are revealed by numerous **architectural** works that are on the **UNESCO World Heritage List**.

The **Game of Thrones** was filmed in parts of Split and Dubrovnik, two of the better-known **picturesque harbours**, but the **Dalmatian Coast** certainly has many more. The heart shaped islands (over 1200 of them) are dotted all along the coast which is why a **Cruise in Croatia** is the **ultimate experience**. This part of the Adriatic **Sea is crystal clear** and known to be the cleanest and most beautiful in the world. The wonderful, almost **turquoise colour** is so clear you can see the pebbles on the seafloor. This is the **postcard image** of the country.

The **G&T Cruise** will sail through this **exceptional sea archipelago** while having time to **explore** the best of the many islands. Our **7-night cruise** is on a **Luxury Small Ship** with just 18 cabins. This has been on 'our bucket list' for ever! **Careful consideration** was given to get the right ship. We have secured 13 of the 18 cabins so we should be the majority on the ship. **She is a beauty!** Brand new with all the 'bells and whistles'. **Luxury** cabins, **first class restaurant**, plenty of room to **relax on deck**, the best **easy access** for swimming (lots of water toys), a **jacuzzi on deck** and **comfortable** seating and **sun lounges** throughout (enough for everyone)!

May is the **perfect time** to sail '**The Dalmatian Coast**' as we will be avoiding the flocks of tourists and big cruise ships along with enjoying the **mild comfortable weather**. True **Magic!**

COME ALONG AND JOIN G&T FOR THIS BRILLIANT TOUR OF THE BALKANS.



HOW WE DIFFER

The following are some of the considerations we made, while developing this Balkans programme.

1. G&T always develop an **exciting itinerary** with natural flow to maximise our time and experience. We choose our tour dates with regard for the best possible weather and less crowds. Importance for The Balkans was given to the appreciation of the abundance of natural beauty and **UNESCO World Heritage Sites** but not forgetting the Culture & Lifestyle aspects. The Croatian Cruise portion is designed to indulge in a Small Ship experience and to avoid all those big, overcrowded cruise ships that visit in June/July/August. 'Believe us when we say you need room to move in the small villages'
2. G&T **handpicked superb accommodation** with the concept of **adding to your overall experience**. Several, multi night stops have been added so you'll have time to enjoy the facilities and have time to immerse yourself into the local scene. Our choices were made with consideration of location and proximity to the action, spectacular views, style, feel and facilities, not just a star-rating. As for our Croatian Cruise choice this is on the bucket list for most, so we want it to be the 'Ultimate Experience' for all.
3. G&T always make choices that allow easy access to **excellent food**. Whether it be our daily breakfast or the proximity to great restaurants and cafes nearby. We also like to check that the obvious dietary requirements can be catered for. For the Croatian Cruise portion, we are in port each night with a great selection of excellent restaurants to choose from.
4. **G&T always host every Club Tour**. This gives you something no one else can match. We will be with you the entire time, assisting with your needs and looking after you personally. On top of that we will always employ our own National Tour Guides along with localised city guides to better understand the local areas. Croatian Cruise has a professional English Speaking Captain, Crew and Cruise Director.
5. G&T most importantly make sure that the product is '**Great Value**'. Not necessarily the cheapest but well worth the few extra dollars to ensure an amazing experience! The value will be evident in our chosen hotels, diverse itinerary and Luxury Small Ship.
6. G&T always design a tour program with the Clubbers in mind. The concept of the Club remains the same and that is: Our Club is **invite only and not open to the general public**. Clubbers are always encouraged to bring along their immediate family and or friends as we feel that they too will be a good fit for the G&T Travel Club. The Club attracts many well-travelled and fun guests of who are multi repeat Clubbers.

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Day 1 'MIRE SE VINI' - WELCOME TO ALBANIA!

Transfer Airport – Hotel

Upon arrival at the airport, you will be warmly welcomed by our local team. They will greet you with a friendly smile and ensure you feel right at home. Our team will guide you to your designated vehicles for your transfer to the hotel, ensure a smooth and comfortable journey ahead. **NB:** Transfers are included on Arrival Day (Day 1) and Departure Day (Day 22) only! Outside of this we can help to arrange transfers separately (own expense) to meet your flights if required.

An Evening in Tirana:

As the day winds down, take some time to explore **Tirana's vibrant streets** at your own pace. Whether you prefer to stroll through **historic** Skanderbeg Square, soak in the city's lively atmosphere in the Blloku district, or simply unwind at a **charming** café, the Albanian capital offers something for everyone.

Enjoy the city's unique blend of Ottoman, Italian, and communist-era architecture, discover local boutiques and galleries, or indulge in **authentic Albanian cuisine** at one of the many stylish restaurants.

NB: We will have a pre departure meeting in the hotel (time TBA) and please bring along your tipping kitty cash.

Meals Included: Breakfast

Overnight: Rogner Hotel Tirana or similar
(2 nights in a Deluxe Room)

Style: Mediterranean Elegant Hotel
'an oasis in the heart of the city'



Day 2

A DAY OF CONTRASTS:

TIRANA UNCOVERED: A CAPITAL CITY TOUR

Start your day with a guided exploration of **Tirana**, Albania's **lively and colourful capital**. Stroll through Skanderbeg Square, the central plaza surrounded by important national landmarks and **bustling local life**. Visit the **Et'hem Bey Mosque**, a beautifully restored Ottoman-era Mosque known for its **intricate frescoes**. Continue to 'Bunk Art', a vast underground **Cold War bunker** now transformed into a museum that vividly recounts Albania's communist past through **immersive exhibits** and **personal stories**.

Berat: The City of a Thousand Windows.

Travel onward to **Berat**, one of Albania's **most picturesque** and historic cities, set along the banks of the Osum River. Renowned for its **UNESCO World Heritage** listed Ottoman **architecture**, Berat's hillside is dotted with distinctive whitewashed houses and stacked facades that reflect light in a way that inspired its nickname, "**The City of a Thousand Windows**."

Inside the Fortress: Exploring Berat Castle and Historic Quarters.

Climb up to the **magnificent Berat Castle**, a sprawling fortress complex, that dates to the 13th century and remains partially inhabited by locals today. Enjoy **sweeping views** of the **surrounding valleys and mountains**. Stroll through the charming Mangalem and Gorica quarters, where **cobbled streets**, ancient **stone bridges**, and traditional homes reveal the deep layers of Berat's history and culture. Time permitting you may wish to explore the Onufri Museum, home to an impressive collection of Byzantine-era icons painted by master artist Onufri.

Savouring Berat: Leisure and Local Flavours.

In the late afternoon, **enjoy some free time** to wander through **Berat's atmospheric Old Town**, discovering hidden cafés, **artisan shops**, or quiet corners perfect for photos.

Return to Tirana: Rest and Reflection.

Return to Tirana, **relax** at your hotel or perhaps take a **short evening stroll** to soak in the **lively city atmosphere**. You may wish to take advantage of the Hotel pool or Spa.

Meals Included: Breakfast

Overnight: Rogner Hotel Tirana or similar
(2 nights in a Deluxe Room)

Style: Mediterranean Elegant Hotel
'an oasis in the heart of the city'



After breakfast, we bid farewell to Albania's vibrant capital and **head west** toward the glittering **coastline**. Our first seaside encounter is in **Vlora**, where the Adriatic and Ionian seas meet. The birthplace of **Albanian independence** where declaration was signed in 1912.

Llogara Pass: Europe's Hidden Coastal Gem.

The journey continues as we ascend the legendary **Llogara Pass**, one of Europe's most **breathtaking mountain drives**. The road winds high above the **turquoise Ionian Sea**, offering sweeping views of steep cliffs and endless blue horizon. Cameras ready — this is a **photographer's dream!**

The Albanian Riviera: Coastal Beauty Unfolds.

Descending from the pass, we enter the sun-drenched **Albanian Riviera**, a coastline famed for its **natural beauty** and **laid-back charm**.

Highlights along the way include:

- **Palasë**, where dramatic mountains plunge straight into the sea.
- **Dhermi**, a picture-perfect coastal village with white stone houses, blue-domed churches, and narrow alleys scented with jasmine.
- **Porto Palermo Bay**, where the mysterious Ali Pasha Fortress stands on its own peninsula, guarding the waters with centuries of history.

For lunch, we may stop at **Borsh**, where you can dine beside a **cascading waterfall** — a rare and magical setting that perfectly complements the region's rustic beauty.

Arrival in Sarandë: Heart of the Riviera.

As we **continue south**, the Riviera reveals **hidden coves**, silver **olive groves**, and endless sea views as we arrive in **Sarandë**. Sarandë pulses with a vibrant seaside atmosphere, offering lively promenades, and **stunning sunset views** over the Ionian Sea. Check into **your hotel** and feel the energy of this **coastal gem**.

Settle in for the night, perhaps taking a **stroll along the waterfront** or simply relax.

Meals Included: Breakfast

Overnight: Hotel Portanova Sarande or similar
(2 nights in a Superior Seaview Room)

Style: Stylish Boutique Hotel offering stunning views of the Ionian Sea. Located near the city centre and the beach.



Day 4 ECHOES OF ANTIQUITY & MOUNTAIN STRONGHOLDS: EXPLORING BUTRINT: A JOURNEY THROUGH ANTIQUITY

Today, we step into the ancient world at **Butrint National Park**, a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** and one of Albania's **most treasured archaeological wonders**. Wander among the **remarkably preserved ruins** of a city that once stood at the crossroads of Greek, Roman, Byzantine, and Venetian civilizations. Imagine performances in the ancient Greek theatre, **walk through** the remnants of **Roman baths**, and admire the beautiful **Byzantine Basilica** and its **mosaic-laden** Baptistry. As you explore, feel the **layers of history** unfold under the shade of cypresses and olive trees, surrounded by **tranquil lagoon waters**.

The Blue Eye: Nature's Hidden Gem.

Next, we journey to the **Blue Eye (Syri i Kaltër)**, a dazzling **natural spring** renowned for its crystal-clear, **electric blue waters** that seem to glow from the earth's depths. You will stand in awe of one of Albania's most enchanting natural sites.

Gjirokaštër: The City of Stone.

We head inland toward **Gjirokaštër**, a **UNESCO World heritage** listed city clinging dramatically to the mountainside. Known as the **"City of Stone"** for its characteristic slate-roofed Ottoman houses, Gjirokaštër offers an atmospheric blend of history, architecture, and local life. **Climb up** to the mighty **Gjirokaštër Castle**, one of the **largest fortresses in the Balkans**, with sweeping views over the Drino Valley. If you wish you can walk along the massive stone ramparts and visit the **Museum of Arms** that showcases Albania's **military past**, with fascinating displays of weaponry and local resistance stories.

Living Heritage: Skenduli House & Local Traditions.

Step inside the beautifully preserved **Skenduli House** (or visit the Ethnographic Museum) to get an **intimate look at life** inside a traditional fortified Ottoman home, complete with wood-carved ceilings, hidden rooms, and age-old household tools. Feel the **heartbeat of local culture** as you explore **Gjirokaštër's cobbled streets** and **bustling bazaar**, where artisans sell handmade crafts, woven goods, and silverwork that reflect **centuries of craftsmanship**.

A Taste of the Land: Optional Farm-to-Table Lunch.

Optionally, enjoy a delicious farm-to-table lunch just outside the city, **featuring fresh local ingredients** and time-honoured Albanian recipes complete with the region's rich flavours.

Afternoon Experiences & Return to Sarandë.

Depending on availability, time and your interests, **enjoy additional local experiences** – watch skilled artisans at work, join a **coffee-making** ritual steeped in tradition, or even take a gentle **horseback ride** through the **scenic countryside**. As the day winds down, we journey back to the coast, returning to vibrant **Sarandë** for a restful overnight stay.

Meals Included: Breakfast

Overnight: Hotel Portanova Sarande or similar
(2 nights in a Superior Seaview Room)

Style: Stylish Boutique Hotel offering stunning views of the Ionian Sea. Located near the city centre and the beach.



Day 5 HIDDEN VALLEYS & ROMAN ROADS: LEAVING SARANDË: INTO THE HEART OF THE VLORA RIVER VALLEY

We begin our **journey north**, leaving behind the sparkling Ionian coastline. The road soon leads us onto a **less-travelled inland route** near the village of **Qeparo**, where the landscape shifts dramatically. Here, the rugged **Vlora River Valley** unfolds — a tapestry of **terraced hills**, dense **forests**, and winding **rivers** that cut through remote, unspoiled countryside. We will pass through small, **traditional villages** where shepherds guide their flocks across mountain pastures and time seems to stand still. **Nevica** and similar communities, recently connected by improved roads, offer a rare chance to witness **Albania's pastoral life** up close, with stone houses, **rustic charm**, and age-old customs visible at every turn. Along the route, we'll pause to take in **sweeping panoramic views** over the valley, breathe the **fresh mountain air**, and perhaps chat with locals whose **warm hospitality** adds depth to the experience.



Apollonia: Echoes of a Greco-Roman Legacy.

We then venture toward **Fier**, where we encounter the impressive ruins of **Apollonia**, a once-flourishing **Greco-Roman city** founded over 2,500 years ago. Nestled among olive groves and gentle hills, Apollonia was once a renowned centre of learning and culture, **drawing philosophers, poets**, and even Roman emperors. As we walk the ancient streets, the past comes vividly to life: we explore the grand remains of temples, the **Bouleuterion** (council house), the small **Odeon** used for performances, and fortified walls that hint at the city's former importance. Rising above the site is a serene **Byzantine monastery**, home to the **Apollonia Museum**, where beautifully preserved sculptures, mosaics, and artifacts provide a tangible connection to the people who once inhabited this **remarkable place**. As you wander, you'll be struck by the blend of wild beauty and historical richness that makes Apollonia one of Albania's **most atmospheric sites**.

Durrës: Arrival at Albania's Adriatic Gateway.

Later we continue north to **Durrës**, Albania's most **historic port** and a city with over 2,000 years of fascinating history. Once a vital hub on the ancient Roman trade routes, Durrës still reveals its past through **dramatic landmarks** like the great **Roman Amphitheatre**, the largest in the Balkans, partially visible amid the city's modern skyline. As we arrive, you'll sense the **dynamic energy** of a **coastal city** that balances its ancient legacy with the **buzz of everyday Albanian life**. Check into your hotel and enjoy time to relax and settle in. For those inclined, a leisurely stroll along the **vibrant waterfront promenade** offers a perfect close to the day — take in views of the bustling marina, watch locals enjoying cafés and seaside parks, and perhaps savour the sunset as it dips below the Adriatic horizon.

Meals Included: Breakfast

Overnight: Palace Hotel & Spa Durrës or similar
(1 night in an Executive Sea View Room)

Style: Premier Luxury Retreat on the Adriatic coast.
This elegant 5-star hotel offers a blend of modern sophistication and timeless seaside charm. Located right on the beach with a Spa and Wellness centre.

Day 6

HISTORIC STRONGHOLDS & MONTENEGRO'S MOUNTAINS: MORNING DEPARTURE FROM DURRËS

We begin our day **leaving behind the Adriatic shores** and the timeless charm of Durrës, heading north on a journey that takes us deeper into Albania's historical heartland. The road carries us through varied landscapes, from **coastal plains** to **rising hills**, as we make our way toward one of the **country's most legendary towns**.

Discovering Krujë: The Legacy of Skanderbeg.

Perched dramatically on the slopes of Mount Krujë, the **historic town** of Krujë was once the stronghold of **Albania's national hero**, Gjergj Kastrioti Skanderbeg. Here, we visit the Skanderbeg Museum, housed within the imposing **medieval Krujë Castle**, where tales of Skanderbeg's courageous resistance against the Ottoman Empire come vividly to **life through artifacts**, exhibits, and sweeping views over the surrounding countryside. Afterward, we wander the **charming old bazaar**, a bustling stretch of cobblestone lined with shops where **local artisans** sell **traditional crafts**, handwoven textiles, **delicate filigree jewellery**, antiques, and souvenirs - maybe pick up a **unique piece of Albania's cultural heritage**.

Exploring Shkodër: The Heart of Northern Albania.

Continuing north, we reach Shkodër, one of the **oldest and most culturally vibrant cities** in Albania. This **northern jewel** has long been a crossroads of cultures, known for its rich history, arts, and **architectural charm**. We ascend to the legendary Rozafa Castle, a hilltop fortress steeped in myths and offering **panoramic views over Lake Shkodër**, the Drin River, and the lush surrounding landscapes. The castle's **ancient stone walls** and towers tell **stories of centuries past**, from Illyrian times through Venetian and Ottoman periods. After exploring the castle, **enjoy some free time** in the city centre, where the lively pedestrian street invites you to stroll among beautifully preserved historic buildings, cozy cafés, and local galleries.

Crossing into Montenegro & Arrival in Kolašin.

In the afternoon, we continue our journey, **crossing the border** into Montenegro.

Traveling through scenic countryside and passing the capital city of **Podgorica**, we gradually climb into the **mountainous** north toward **Kolašin**, a charming **alpine town** known for its fresh air and **natural beauty**.

Driving Through the Majestic Morača Canyon.

Your adventure deepens as we take the old scenic road through the breathtaking **Morača Canyon (Platije)**, where **towering cliffs** rise dramatically over the emerald-green **Morača River**. This canyon has long been a lifeline connecting Montenegro's northern and central regions, **carved by nature over millennia**. Along the way, your guide shares fascinating stories about the local villages tucked into the hills, the resilient **traditional way of life**, and the vital role the Morača River has played in shaping the region's culture and history. Every bend in the road reveals **awe-inspiring vistas**, making this drive an unforgettable highlight of the day.

Visit to Morača Monastery: A Spiritual Landmark.

We stop to visit the iconic **Morača Monastery**, one of Montenegro's most important historical and **spiritual treasures**, founded in **1252**. Set in a peaceful valley, the monastery is renowned for its beautiful Byzantine architecture and its priceless **13th-century frescoes** inside the **Church of the Assumption**, which stand among the finest examples of medieval religious art in the Balkans. As you explore, your guide will reveal the monastery's storied past and its **significance to Montenegro's spiritual heritage**. Don't miss the **ancient walnut tree** in the monastery courtyard — believed to be the oldest cultivated walnut in Montenegro, it has stood here for centuries as a **living symbol of endurance**.

We finish the day in **Kolašin**, enjoy a restful evening surrounded by the **fresh mountain air**. This **alpine retreat**, nestled near the **Biogradska Gora National Park**, offers the perfect setting to relax and prepare for the next chapter of your journey through the Balkans.

Meals Included: Breakfast

Overnight: Hotel Bianca Resort & Spa Kolasin or similar (2 nights in a Superior Room)

Style: Luxury 5-star Hotel. Set amidst 25 hectares of pine forest, it offers breathtaking mountain views. The Energy Clinic Spa Club features a 25-meter indoor pool and a wellness area.

Day 7 **HIGHLAND ESCAPES:** **DISCOVER THE MAGIC OF VRANJAK AND BIOGRADSKA GORA:**

Your adventure continues to the picturesque **Vranjak Highland**, where panoramic views of rugged peaks and **rolling meadows** await. This area is a gateway to the stunning **Biogradska Gora National Park**, one of Europe's last remaining **primeval forests** and a haven of biodiversity.

The day is yours to enjoy a range of activities in this pristine environment:

Off-road Jeep Safari: Traverse the rugged terrain in a jeep, exploring remote paths that wind through dramatic landscapes and past hidden mountain gems.

Hiking Around Lakes: Discover the serene beauty of glacial lakes surrounded by lush greenery, with opportunities to enjoy the fresh mountain air and vibrant flora and fauna.

A Taste of Tradition: Visit a **Katun**, a traditional mountain dwelling used by herders in the summer months and enjoy an authentic Montenegrin meal. Savor local delicacies such as homemade cheese, fresh bread, and smoked meats while learning about the timeless traditions of the highlands.

After you'll return to your hotel. The rest of the afternoon is yours to **relax** at the hotel, **explore** the charming town, or simply reflect on the beauty of **Montenegro's mountain wilderness**.

Meals Included: Breakfast

Overnight: Hotel Bianca Resort & Spa Kolasin or similar (2 nights in a Superior Room)

Style: Luxury 5-star Hotel. Set amidst 25 hectares of pine forest, it offers breathtaking mountain views. The Energy Clinic Spa Club features a 25-meter indoor pool and a wellness area.

Day 8 **ADVENTURE IN DURMITOR NATIONAL PARK:**

Begin your day with a **hearty breakfast** at the hotel, preparing you for the **exciting adventures** that await. You will meet your guide in the lobby, who will provide an overview of the thrilling activities planned for the day.

Journey to Durmitor National Park.

You'll depart for Durmitor National Park, the **crown jewel** of **Montenegro's natural beauty**.

Walking Tour around Black Lake.

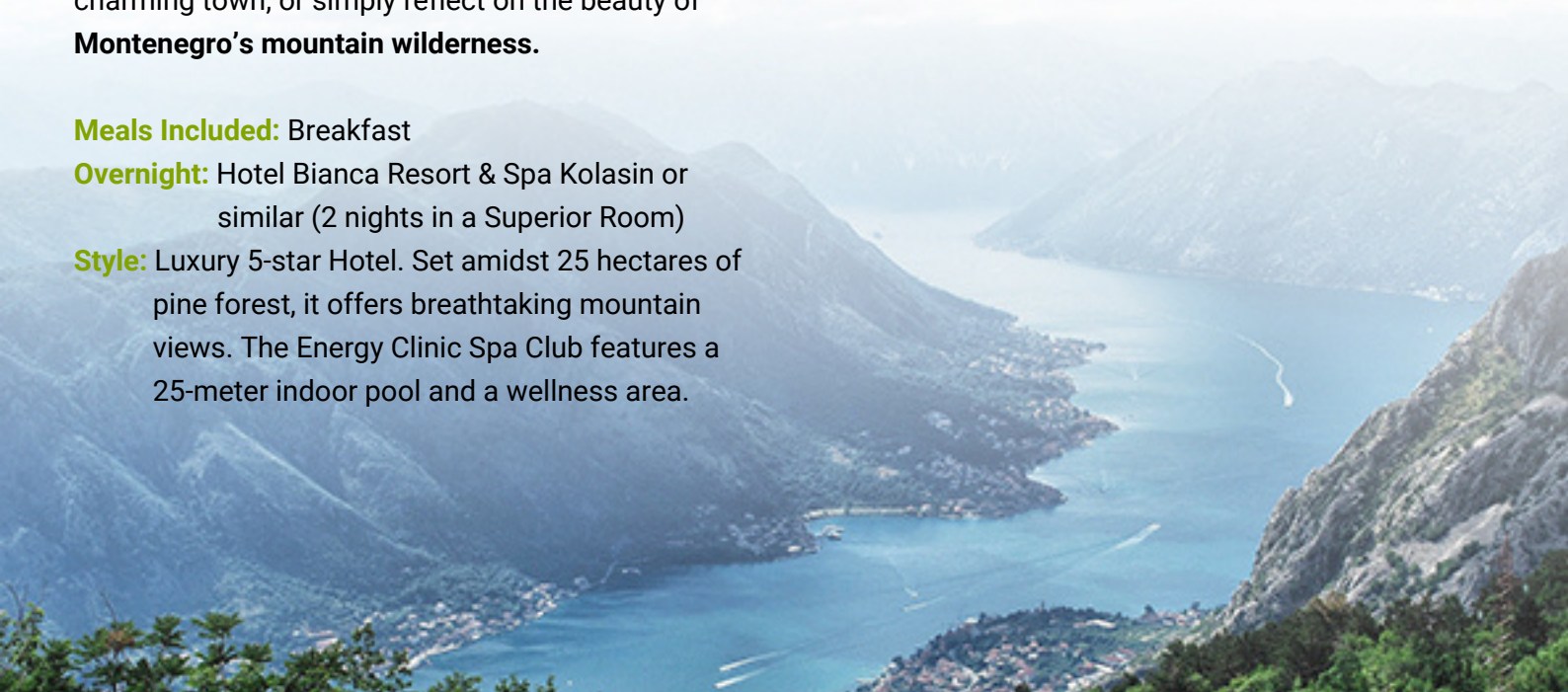
This is an easy walking tour around Black Lake, where you'll discover its stunning surroundings and **diverse wildlife**. Wander along the **tranquil paths**, breathe in the **fresh mountain air**, and immerse yourself in the **natural beauty** of this remarkable area.

After a day full of excitement and exploration, head to your hotel in Žabljak. **Enjoy your free time in Žabljak**. Stroll through the **charming town**, visit local shops, or simply unwind in the beautiful natural setting.

Meals Included: Breakfast

Overnight: Ski Hotel Zabljak or similar
(1 night Superior in a Room)

Style: Lodge Style Hotel in the heart of Montenegro's top mountain town.



We travel today through **Trsa**, a **remote mountain village** offering **breathtaking views** of the **rugged Montenegrin wilderness**.

The Spectacular Piva Canyon.

Descending towards Piva, we traverse one of **Montenegro's most dramatic landscapes** - the Piva Canyon, **carved by the emerald-green Piva River**. We make a stop at Piva Lake, a stunning artificial reservoir surrounded by steep cliffs, perfect for capturing **unforgettable photos**.

Spiritual Retreat at Ostrog Monastery.

Continuing south, we arrive at Ostrog Monastery, one of the most **revered pilgrimage** sites in the Balkans. **Built into a sheer rock face**, this 17th-century monastery is a place of spiritual significance.

A Scenic Journey to Rijeka Crnojevića.

Next, we descend towards the **picturesque village** of Rijeka Crnojevića, nestled along the **tranquil Skadar Lake**. This charming riverside town, once a royal retreat, is an ideal spot to enjoy a **leisurely walk**, admire the **historic stone bridge**, or **savour local delicacies** by the water.

Continue to Budva: After experiencing Montenegro's diverse landscapes - from dramatic mountain passes and **deep canyons** to historic monasteries and serene lakes - it's time to **unwind by the Adriatic Sea**.

Meals Included: Breakfast

Overnight: Avala Resort & Villas Budva or similar
(2 nights in a Superior Room with
Sea View)

Style: Avala Resort & Villas is a Luxury 4-star Spa Hotel located on the edge of the Adriatic Sea just steps away from the historic Old Town of Budva.



Day 10

MONTENEGRO FROM ABOVE: SCENIC ASCENT TO LOVĆEN NATIONAL PARK

Departing from Budva, we embark on a **breathtaking drive** up the winding roads of Lovćen National Park. As we ascend, **panoramic views** of the **Adriatic coastline** unfold, revealing Montenegro's **stunning contrast between sea and mountains**.

Njegoš Mausoleum: A View from the Top.

Our first stop is the Njegoš Mausoleum, perched atop Jezerski Vrh (1,657m). After **climbing 461 steps** we reach the final resting place of Petar II Petrović Njegoš, Montenegro's greatest ruler and poet. From here, one of **the most spectacular views** in the Balkans stretches **across Boka Bay, Skadar Lake**, and even Albania on clear days.

NB: The walk to the top is optional and views are great even not making it to the top!

Cetinje: Montenegro's Royal Capital.

Descending from Lovćen, we arrive in Cetinje, **Montenegro's historic royal capital**. A guided stroll takes us through its charming streets, past centuries-old embassies, **royal palaces**, and monasteries, **each telling the story** of the nation's **proud past**. A visit to King Nikola's Palace or the Cetinje Monastery offers deeper insight into **Montenegro's heritage**.

Underground Wonders of Lipa Cave.

Just outside Cetinje lies Lipa Cave, one of Montenegro's **largest** and most **fascinating cave systems**. With its vast underground chambers, striking stalactites, and hidden passages, this natural wonder offers a **mesmerising journey** beneath the earth, guided by expert speleologists. Return to Budva for the evening. Explore the many restaurants.

Meals Included: Breakfast

Overnight: Avala Resort & Villas Budva or similar
(2 nights in a Superior Room with
Sea View)

Style: Avala Resort & Villas is a Luxury 4-star Spa Hotel located on the edge of the Adriatic Sea just steps away from the historic Old Town of Budva.



Day 11 A COASTAL ADVENTURE:

After a **leisurely breakfast**, you'll set out on a day filled with breathtaking coastal views, rich history, and unforgettable experiences along **Montenegro's stunning Boka Bay**.

Discover the Baroque Beauty of Perast.

Our first stop is the **charming town** of Perast, a **UNESCO World Heritage** Site nestled on the tranquil shores of the bay. Known for its **elegant Baroque architecture** and rich maritime heritage, Perast offers a glimpse into **Montenegro's seafaring past**. As we wander through its picturesque streets, your guide will share captivating stories and point out highlights such as the town's ornate palaces and churches that line the waterfront.

Sailing to the Legendary Our Lady of the Rocks.

From Perast, we board a **traditional boat and sail** towards the iconic 'Our Lady of the Rocks', a **man-made island** steeped in legend.

Built by sailors who dropped stones into the sea for centuries, this island is home to a stunning little church/museum. As we explore, you'll hear the fascinating tales of its creation and enjoy panoramic views of the bay that surround this **magical place**.

After our boat tour, we **bid farewell to Montenegro** and continue around the coast to **Croatia**, where the day's final highlight awaits - the timeless beauty of Dubrovnik.

Meals Included: Breakfast

Overnight: Hotel Lero Dubrovnik or similar
(1 night in a Superior Double)

Style: Hotel Lero is a well-established 4-star Hotel located about a 15-minute walk from the UNESCO World Heritage listed Old Town.



Day 12

START OF THE 8-DAY DALMATIAN COAST CRUISE PROGRAM:

NOTE: This G&T experience is **NOT** on one of those 'Big Cruise Ships', nor is it on one of those old tired and faded Small Ships.

Our Small Ship Luxury Cruise is on the newest vessel on The Dalmatian Coast (brand new as of Spring 2025) and has a total of 18 cabins. 9 Main Deck and 9 Lower Deck. She is one of the most stylish and elegant ships ever built in Croatia, offering a luxurious and intimate cruise experience. She has all the best facilities and added extra comfort even a jacuzzi on deck.

G&T have secured several added bonuses for our group to make this the ultimate experience in style.

NB: Solo occupancy on the ship is costed as almost the total cabin cost so you may wish to share with someone for the Cruise portion and remain solo for the Land portion. Contact us if you need further details!

NB: We cannot hold all cabins, so we are holding a mixture of Main and Lower deck cabins (13 in total). It will be as always first in first served for the cabin allocation. The Lower Deck cabins are only slightly cheaper and will save you approximately \$1000.00AUD

NB: Your typical daily routine onboard your ship will be a blend of swimming off the easy access swim deck, relaxing on the spacious sundeck, enjoying delicious 3 course lunches, soaking in the jacuzzi, sitting in the shade on the sofas as the spectacular scenery passes by. Snappy gorgeous photos and making your friends jealous as the free Wi-Fi allows you to keep in contact. Most evenings will be onshore so that we can experience the true local cuisine and atmosphere as we immerse ourselves further into the local scene.

Meals Included: Breakfast

Included Excursion: Expert guided tour of Dubrovnik

Day 13

SLANO & MALI STON:

Today we will sail to the **charming village of Slano**. You can relax and enjoy the stunning scenery, as we cruise around Dubrovnik's city walls before heading in the direction of the **Elaphiti islands** for a swim stop.

Afternoon arrival in Slano, a **traditional fisherman's village**, from where we head towards Mali Ston, a sought-after seaside town which is known for its **oyster production**. You will take a small boat out into the **middle of the estuary** and enjoy sampling fresh oysters directly from the sea with a dash of lemon and some **locally produced wine**. This unique experience is often a guest's favourites!

NB: You don't have to enjoy oysters and wine to enjoy this experience.

Return to Slano for a **Welcome Dinner on board the ship**.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch & Welcome dinner
Included Excursion: Oyster farm visit and tasting experience in Mali Ston



Day 14

MLJET NATIONAL PARK & KORCULA:

Today we depart early to visit the **tranquil** and **stunning Mljet National Park**. On arrival, our cruise director will take you for a stroll to **visit the famous salt lakes**, situated in the heart of the park. We **then sail** on to the island of **Korcula**, which is best known as the **birthplace of the famous explorer Marco Polo**. Relax and admire the stunning **secluded bays** on route. We will have a **guided walking** tour of the **charming Old Town**. The picturesque and **fortified town**, ruled by Venetians in the past, has an ingenious layout in the shape of a fishbone.

This evening, **enjoy dinner** on your own in one of **Korcula's many restaurants**.

Meals Included: Breakfast & Lunch

Included Excursion: Entrance to the Mljet NP & Expert guided tour of Korcula town



Day 15

PAKLENI ISLAND & HVAR:

We depart from Korcula and sail on towards Hvar Island. **Sailing by the beautiful Pakleni island archipelago** which is known for its stunning secluded bays with **crystal clear water**. We will enjoy a swim stop in one of the **peaceful bays** before arriving to Hvar, with an exciting **Hvar family winery tour** planned. The first stop is an opportunity for you to sample some locally produced wines at a very sought-after family winery. **NB:** You don't need to enjoy wine to enjoy this experience. We then continue to the **cosmopolitan town of Hvar**, where you will have **free time to explore** this picturesque town at your leisure.

Meals Included: Breakfast & Lunch

Included Excursion: Hvar family winery tour

Day 16

BLUE CAVE & VIS ISLAND:

This morning, we set off from the island of Hvar and head to the **Island of Bisevo**, home to the **magical Blue Cave**. Enjoy an optional guided tour inside this beautiful natural phenomenon and marvel at the **beautiful colours** which will leave you mesmerised. *Please note that entry to the Blue Cave is subject to weather and sea conditions and therefore the entry fee of EUR25pp is payable on the day.*

After our visit to the Blue Cave, we will enjoy a short swim stop before arriving to the island of Vis. **Vis** was once a strategic **Yugoslav naval base** and off limits to visitors. Due to the island's **seclusion and isolation**, Vis has retained a **unique charm** that typifies 'the Mediterranean as it once was'. Enjoy the **afternoon at leisure** exploring the picturesque towns with its **charming seafront cafes** and labyrinth of **quaint streets**.

Meals Included: Breakfast & Lunch

Optional Excursion: Optional guided tour of the Blue Cave (subject to weather conditions & payable locally)

Day 17 TROGIR:

The charming **medieval town** of Trogir is our next destination today. This **UNESCO World Heritage** listed gem with its **pristine marina** is often compared to a **mini-Venice**. On route to Trogir the **captain will find a secluded spot** for you to enjoy swimming from the back of the ship.

Today you will have a choice of tour:

You can join our **local guide** for a guided tour of Trogir, where our local expert will take you through the **labyrinth of backstreets and medieval alleyways** in this **hidden gem**.

OR

You can hop on a **bus** and join us for a **ride to Split**, where we will meet with our **local guide** for a **walking tour of Split**, a city known for its rich history, vibrant culture, and stunning natural surroundings. This evening you will enjoy dinner on your own in either of the 2 towns.

Meals Included: Breakfast & Lunch

Included Excursion: Guided tour of Trogir or a Guided tour of Split.



Day 18 OMIS:

On the **final day of your cruise**, we make an early departure from the old medieval town of Trogir and **head towards Omis**. On route you will enjoy a refreshing morning swim stop prior to arriving at your destination. Omis is a **picturesque town** located on the central **Dalmatian Coast of Croatia**, where the Cetina River meets the Adriatic Sea. It's known for its **stunning natural beauty**, rich **history**, and charming **atmosphere**. Nestled between **dramatic cliffs** and lush **green landscapes**, Omis is a perfect blend of **rugged coastal terrain** and **tranquil Mediterranean charm**.

In the afternoon you will have **free time to explore the town** at your leisure.

This evening you will enjoy a **Captain's dinner on board** the vessel to celebrate this week's journey with your fellow passengers.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch & Captain's Dinner



Day 19 TOUR OF KRKA NATIONAL PARK AND SIBENIK:

'Sadly, this is the end of your spectacular sailing adventure'. After breakfast, it is time to **say goodbye to the crew** and meet back up with our coach.

Today we drive onto Sibenik is **the oldest Croatian town** on the Adriatic coast, located in a large bay where the Krka River meets the sea. It grew from an old Croatian fort near the **Fortress of St. Michael**, which still overlooks the town. It's **narrow winding streets**, stony houses, many staircases and the remains of the city walls give Sibenik that romantic Mediterranean atmosphere. The St. James Cathedral is the most famous **architectural masterpiece** in Sibenik, listed as the **UNESCO World Heritage** site. The building of the cathedral took over a hundred years. Made of stone exclusively, its **unique constructions** were both bold and unusual for that time. The Cathedral, the Renaissance Town Hall, the Prince's Castle, the neighbouring churches and palaces - all are a part of an **impressive square**, probably the **most beautiful** one in the town-planning **heritage of Croatia**. Following the Tour of Sibenik, we drive to Krka.



Krka National Park covers a total area of 109 km² of the loveliest sections of the Krka River, and the lower course of the Čikola River. The **National Park is a vast** and primarily unaltered area of **exceptional natural value**, including one or more **preserved** or insignificantly altered **ecosystems**. The purpose of the park is primarily to serve science, culture, education and recreation. With its **seven breathtaking waterfalls** and a total drop in altitude of 242 m, the **Krka NP is a natural and karst phenomenon**.

Meals Included: Breakfast

Overnight: The Lyra Hotel Plitvice or similar
(1 night in a Superior Double Room)

Style: Lyra Hotel Plitvice is a Modern Hotel located near the Plitvice Lakes National Park (one of Croatia's most stunning natural wonders) has easy access to the park's picturesque trails, waterfalls, and lakes.

Day 20 A JOURNEY TO NATURE'S WONDERLAND AND A TASTE OF ZAGREB:

Set off on a **breathtaking journey** to one of Croatia's most spectacular **natural wonders**.

Exploring the Natural Majesty of Plitvice Lakes.

Upon arrival at Plitvice Lakes National Park, a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**, embark on a **guided exploration** of this mesmerising landscape. **Marvel at 16 interconnected lakes** cascading into one another through a series of **breathtaking waterfalls**, all surrounded by **dense forests** teeming with **wildlife**. Follow wooden pathways that wind through **crystal-clear waters**, listen to the gentle roar of waterfalls, and take in the ever-changing hues of the lakes, from deep **emerald to turquoise blue**.

NB: 'Easy walking'

A Picturesque Stop at Rastoke Waterfalls.

Our next stop is near Zagreb and brings us to Rastoke, a **charming village** often called 'the small Plitvice.' Nestled where the Slunjčica River meets the Korana River, Rastoke is **famous for its own enchanting waterfalls**, traditional **watermills**, and **fairy-tale scenery**. Take a moment to **wander through the village**, capture breathtaking views, and learn about its centuries-old heritage before continuing our journey.

Arrive at Zagreb.

Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, is a city rich in history, culture, and charm, making it the perfect city to finish our adventure. The city's origins can be traced back to the Roman era, though it gained prominence in the medieval period with the establishment of **two distinct settlements**: Gradec and Kaptol. These two areas, now known as Upper Town (Gornji Grad) and Lower Town (Donji Grad), formed the **backbone of the modern city** and were historically divided by religious and political influences. **Gradec, the medieval merchant town**, was a fortified area known for its walls and defensive structures.

Kaptol was the religious heart, home to the Zagreb Cathedral, which dominates the skyline today. The two settlements often had tensions but eventually united in the 19th century, laying the foundation for the **modern city** we know today. The 20th century saw Zagreb modernize, while still retaining its historic charm. From the devastation of World War II to the rise of Croatian independence in the early 1990s, Zagreb has evolved into a dynamic and vibrant European capital, blending medieval charm with modern urban life.

A Culinary Adventure: The Zagreb Food Tour:

After discovering the city's sights, it's time to **experience Zagreb** through its flavours. **Join a food tour** that will take you through the **best local spots**, hidden eateries, and traditional markets. Savor authentic **Croatian specialties**, from delicious štrukli and hearty goulash to artisanal cheeses and fine local wines. Along the way, learn about **Zagreb's rich culinary heritage** and the influences that shaped its cuisine - YUM!

Meals Included: Breakfast and Foodie Tour

Overnight: Amadria Park Hotel Capital Zagreb or similar
(2 nights in a Superior Room)

Style: Amadria Park Hotel Capital offers a unique blend of Historical Elegance and Modern Luxury, just a 5-minute walk from Ban Jelačić Square.



Day 21 CASTLES AND BAROQUE ELEGANCE:

A day trip from Zagreb to **Trakošćan Castle and Varaždin** offers a perfect blend of history, stunning landscapes, and charming architecture, making it **an ideal getaway in northern Croatia**.

Start the morning with a scenic drive from **Zagreb**, heading northwest through the rolling hills and picturesque countryside of **Hrvatsko Zagorje**, a region known for its **medieval castles, vineyards, and traditional villages**. Along the way, you'll pass charming rural landscapes dotted with **wooden houses** and **small farms**, offering a glimpse into Croatia's pastoral heritage.

Your first stop is **Trakošćan Castle**, originally built in the 13th century as part of a defensive system along the Hungarian Croatian border, Trakošćan later became a **noble residence**. The **Drašković** family, who owned the castle, transformed it into a romantic **Neo-Gothic** estate in the 19th century. Today, it houses a museum featuring medieval weapons, antique furniture, and portraits of Croatian nobility. After exploring the castle's **richly decorated interior**, take a **leisurely walk around the lake**, surrounded by lush forests and offering **spectacular photo opportunities**.

Continue to **Varaždin**. This Baroque gem, once the capital of **Croatia** in the 18th century, flourished under noble patronage, leading to the construction of elegant palaces, grand churches, and **beautifully manicured gardens**. The city's historic core is a well-preserved **architectural masterpiece**, featuring pastel-coloured facades, cobblestone streets, and an **ambiance reminiscent of Vienna**.

Explore the **Varaždin Castle** (Old Town), a medieval fortress dating back to the 14th century, which now houses the **Varaždin City Museum** with exhibitions on the city's noble past, armour collections, and artistic heritage. Stroll through **Korzo Square**, home to the 16th-century **Town Hall**, one of the oldest in Croatia, and visit the **Cathedral of the Assumption**, an 18th-century Jesuit church known for its **intricate Baroque interior**. If time permits, take a walk through **Varaždin's Cemetery**, a beautifully landscaped park often compared to Vienna's cemeteries due to its artistic tombstones and tree-lined paths.

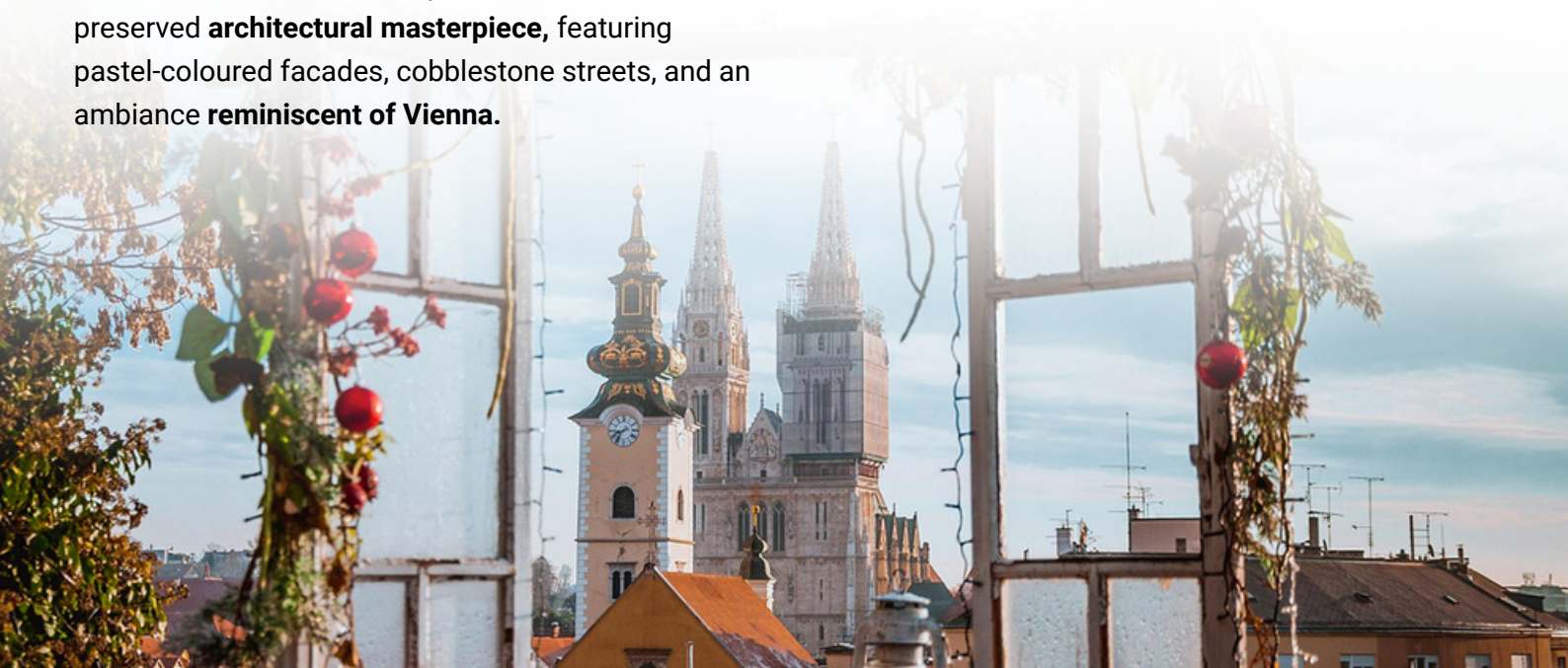
You may wish to enjoy a traditional meal at a local restaurant, sampling regional specialties like **zagorski štrukli** (cheese-filled pastry) or a hearty Croatian stew.

We then drive back to Zagreb for an **evening of celebration**.

Meals Included: Breakfast

Overnight: Amadria Park Hotel Capital Zagreb
or similar
(2 nights in a Superior Room)

Style: Amadria Park Hotel Capital offers a unique blend of Historical Elegance and Modern Luxury, just a 5-minute walk from Ban Jelačić Square.



Day 22 TRANSFER HOTEL – AIRPORT

After breakfast you have free time until your airport transfer.

As your journey in The Balkans comes to an end, we hope you have enjoyed the very best of what this beautiful region has to offer. With warm memories and unforgettable experiences, we now transfer you to the airport.

Meals Included: Breakfast



[CLICK HERE TO VIEW INTERACTIVE TOUR MAP ONLINE](#)





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'BRILLIANT BALKANS' **Departs from Tirana, Albania**
Returns to Zagreb, Croatia

LAND INCLUSIONS:

- Accommodation in Double/Twin/ or Single rooms
- Breakfast daily in the hotels
- Lunches and dinners as indicated in the program
- Modern A/C touring minibus or larger coach depending on the group size
- English speaking escort/guide
- Local guides where required
- Entrance fees to all mentioned monuments/sites

CRUISE INCLUSIONS:

- Cruise Dubrovnik to Split with transfers to and from the Ship
- Welcome Reception
- Breakfast and Lunches daily - Lunches are a set 3 course with Fresh Salad & Cheese Bar
- Captains Welcome and Farewell Dinners
- Complimentary Fresh Fruit, Tea & Coffee and Filtered Drinking Water daily
- Wine Tour and Oyster Farm visit
- National Park entrance fees as per itinerary
- Guided local tours as per the itinerary
- Experienced English-Speaking Captain, Crew and Cruise Director
- Fascinating optional onboard lectures
- Complimentary onboard water sport equipment, including Sea Kayaks, stand up Paddle Boards, Snorkelling Equip, flotation devices for non-swimmers
- Complimentary WIFI and Beach towels

ADDED EXTRA INCLUSIONS:

- Privilege card with Discounts for NIGHTLY restaurants onshore
- Travel App with a great restaurant guide
- 24/7 Emergency local assistance with a Split based ground crew
- Gools and Thommo as your hosts



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LAND EXCLUSIONS:

- Travel Insurance and visas (Compulsory)
- Expenses of a personal nature such as alcoholic drinks, snacks, laundry, etc.
- Any additional optional activities you may wish to add on.
- Staff and Crew Gratuities
- NB: Prices are subject to change if there are any government tax increases on hotels & transportation or any increases in included monument entry fees.

CRUISE EXCLUSIONS:

- Entrance to Blue Cave (as it is weather permitting APPROX Euro 25 per person)
- Croatian Port Taxes Euro 70 per person for the entire cruise
- Any additional optional tours not included in the itinerary
- Any meals and drinks not included in the itinerary
- Crew Gratuities
- NB: Prices are subject to change if there are any government tax increases on hotels & transportation or any increases in included monument entry fees.

Note: *Tipping in The Balkans is customary. We have found from experience that the best way to deal with this is to generate a 'tips kitty' which takes away the guess work and the need for constant small change which can be embarrassing. Please budget Euro €250 cash for this kitty. Small denominations are best. Please have this cash ready for collection at our pre departure meeting on day 1.*

AUSTRALIAN DOLLAR DEVALUATION REPRICE CLAUSE

G&T price our tours on a very narrow margin to give you, our clubbers, the best possible value for money.

In the event of a major currency fluctuation/devaluation, we reserve the right to recalculate the price until the final payment due date. If AUD / EURO rate drops below AUD 1.00 = EURO 0.52, we reserve the right to reprice the tour.

Note: This EURO 'trigger rate' of AUD 1.00 = EURO 0.52 is not the 'official rate' you see advertised by the bank, but our 'buy' rate when we purchase the currency through our bank which is the National Australia Bank (NAB).



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G&T NUTS AND BOLTS:

We are not a Tour Company, we are a Travel Club. This means this tour is not open to the general public at all. This invitation is only for those of you who have travelled with us before and extended to your family and friends.
PLEASE NOTE: Our G&T Travel Club is not associated in any way with Adventure Wild Pty Ltd. Adventure Wild are aware and fully supportive of our Travel Club but please ensure all correspondence is directed back to us.

GROUP SIZE

We do require a minimum of 10 guests on each tour to guarantee the departures.

Many of our chosen accommodations are in highly sort after locations and we have a maximum of 13 rooms/cabins blocked for us. This means, as we secure single room occupancy for our solo travellers our group sizes will decrease as we fill our maximum 13 rooms/cabins.

NB: Group size will then be a maximum of 18-20 guests on each tour

NB: Our average group size historically has been 13-16, depending on the number of solo travellers.

NB: For the Cruise Portion the tour is costed on Main Deck Cabins (10 ONLY).

A Lower Deck Cabin (8 ONLY) will be a little cheaper (APPROX \$1000.00AUD per person TWIN/DBL share)

NB: For our Solo Clubbers a '**SOLO Cabin**' is almost the full cost of the TWIN/DBL cabin

Please ask if you wish for us to find a travel buddy to share the Cruise portion with.

