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SLOVENIA WESTERN WINE TOUR

9 days / 8 nights

Discovering Slovenian Western Wine Region and the Coast

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- Experience the very best of Slovenian cuisine accompanied with a glass of exquisite Slovenian wine
- Visit a home of the oldest wine in the world
- Walk along the oldest city in Slovenia
- Stay at one of the greenest, safest and the most honest city in the world
- Step into the mysterious world of Karst region
- Enjoy the Slovenian Adriatic Coast

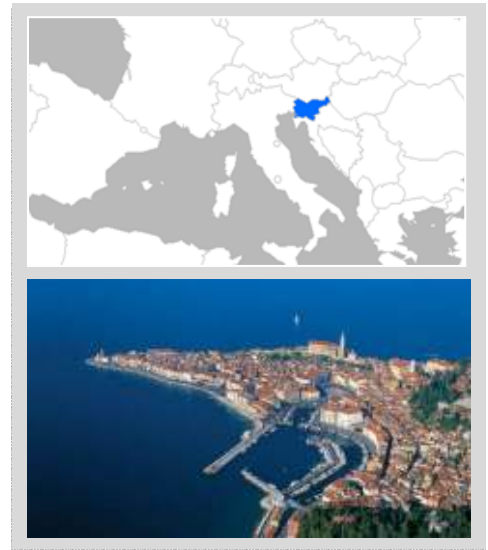


GENERAL INFORMATION

SLOVENIA

The country of Slovenia lies in the heart of the enlarged Europe. It has a border with Italy, Austria, Hungary and Croatia. The capital Ljubljana is a modern, fresh, young, creative and surprising city.

Slovenia, a green and diverse country between the Alps and the Mediterranean, boasts all the beauties of the Old World. When you want to experience Europe in one stroke, come to Slovenia. In just 20,273 square kilometres there are snow-covered mountains, a sea coast bathing in the Mediterranean sun, beautiful karst caves and thermal springs, narrow white-water canyons and wide slow moving rivers, high mountain lakes and lakes that disappear mysteriously underground at the start of summer, ancient villages and medieval cities, the antique castles and modern entertainment, countless vineyards with top quality wines, and the only primeval forest in Europe. Here in this small and easily covered area, where hundreds of birds migrating south make a briefly stop and where dozens of unique indigenous plants find their home, more diverse experiences await you all year round than can be found anywhere else.



SUGGESTED ITINERARY

DAY 1

Arrival to Ljubljana Airport
Drive to Ljubljana (28km) and check-in to a hotel
A sightseeing tour around Ljubljana
Free for dinner
Overnight in Ljubljana

LJUBLJANA - a charming mixture of styles of Central Europe

One of Europe's best-kept secrets, the ancient walled city of Ljubljana lies at the very heart of Slovenia and boasts a vibrant history that traces 3,000 years of Roman, Medieval, Baroque and Italian influences. A friendly and cosmopolitan city Ljubljana offers a broad selection of diversions that range from strolling the shimmering reaches of the Ljubljana River to exploring the formal gardens and fortified battlements of the city. There is also wandering the cobbled streets of the Old town and a bright café society to be enjoyed plus plenty of atmospheric bars, a broad range of regional restaurants and a host of cultural events.



DAY 2

Breakfast in the hotel
A day at leisure or an excursion to Maribor or Dolenjska region
Option A: a whole day tour to Maribor and Ptuj (128km) with a wine tasting and lunch
Option B: a whole day tour to Dolenjska region (65km) with a wine tasting and lunch
Free for dinner
Overnight in Ljubljana

OPTION A: MARIBOR – The Second Most Important centre in Slovenia

The Stajerska region capital, the second most important centre in Slovenia, invites you to discover its wine growing hills and green Pohorje. It is the foothills and the slopes of the Mariborsko Pohorje that are developing into the key tourist area. Extensive vineyards, which rise from the edge of town over the hills of Maribor, are interwoven with more than 50 kilometres of wine roads. Discovering Pohorje's primeval forest and pure waters offers an unforgettable experience for ramblers as well as lovers of horse riding and cycling. Stroll through the proud centre of north-eastern Slovenia, the university city of Maribor. Bearing witness to a flourishing history is the rich architecture of past centuries, which reflects in the frontages of the houses. Maribor is becoming a modern shopping place and one of the biggest tourist centres in the country. Along the Drava river, your stroll will take you past numerous cafés to the "Stara trta" grapevine in Lent, named as the oldest grapevine in the world in the Guinness Book of World Records. Treat yourself to refreshment and relaxation in restaurants and wine cellars or to some food for the soul in museums and art galleries and at numerous cultural events. Or maybe relax your body and senses at the Habakuk Wellness and Spa Center or the Fontana Medical and Recreation Centre, possibilities in Maribor are endless.



PTUJ - treasure house of the millennium

Ptuj is the oldest town in Slovenia, full of interesting sights such as the uniquely beautiful 'Orpheus' monument in the centre of the town, a Roman tombstone that dates from 2nd century, and a wide range of medieval, baroque and renaissance architectural treasures. During your stay you also shouldn't forget to visit the glorious castle of Ptuj. Its rich history reaches back to the Stone Age, but the city experienced its greatest flowering in the Roman period. The name originated in the times of Emperor Trajan, who granted the settlement city status and named it Colonia Ulpia Traiana Poetovio. In 69 A.D., Emperor Vespasian was elected in Ptuj, and the first written mention of the city of Ptuj is from the same year. Once a roman settlement Poetovio then contributed very well to its lively history and so had developed into an important cultural, administrative, economic, educational and traffic centre worth visiting at any time of the year.

OPTION B: NOVO MESTO

Novo mesto, also called the metropolis of Dolenjska region, was founded in the year 1395, when the Austrian Archduke Rudolf IV granted city rights to the town at the bend of the Krka River. Officially called Rudolfsferd, it grew as Novo Mesto (literally the "New Town"). But the city by the Krka River was inhabited even earlier; in fact, it represents one of the most important archaeological sites of the Hallstatt culture from the Early Iron Age. They found numerous situlas from that time, so the city has been nicknamed the "City of Situlas". Nowadays Novo Mesto represents the cultural and economic centre of Dolenjska region, situated in the midst of the hilly landscape of Dolenjska region, embraced by the Krka River.



DAY 3

Breakfast in the hotel and check-out
Drive to Bled (62km)
Visit of Bled Castle and a ride with pletna boat to Bled island
Free for lunch
Drive to Pristava (76km) via Kranjska Gora
Check-in to a hotel
Free for dinner
Overnight in Pristava

BLED – Alpine pearl of Slovenia

The picture-postcard of the Alpine town of Bled was once the preferred choice of the Austro-Hungarian Empire's elite. Its many charms include a medieval castle, perched high on a rocky cliff, a scenic lake studded by a tiny wooded island, and the alpine splendour of the nearby Triglav National Park, a natural wonderland of glacial valleys, glittering peaks, limestone canyons, ice-cold tarns, flowered meadows, Alpine forests, pretty hamlets and cascading waterfalls. It is a tourist place, surrounded by the wreaths of the Julian Alps and Karavanke Mountains, placed in a dish-shaped basin of a glacial lake, the warmest in Europe.

KRANJSKA GORA – a great opportunity for outdoor recreation in the superb natural surrounding

Zgornjesavska valley is one of the most breathtaking alpine valleys. The valley has developed into a major tourist and sports region, famed primarily for its World Cup competitions in alpine skiing and ski flights on the giant ski-jump in Planica. The valley, situated between Karavanke mountains and the Julian Alps, is renowned for the hospitality and friendliness of the local people. Kranjska Gora is both the municipal centre and the largest town in Zgornjesavska valley as well as a famous year-round mountain tourist resort and an important, well-known winter sports resort.



DAY 4

Breakfast in the hotel
A whole day in Soca Valley
Drive to Bovec and a visit of Boka waterfall (12km)
Drive to Kobarid (22km) and free for lunch at a local restaurant
A visit of Tolmin Gorge (20km)
Return to the hotel (47km)
Free for dinner
Overnight in Pristava

SOCA VALLEY

The Soca Valley is dominated by one of Europe's most beautiful rivers. The Soca's stunning turquoise hue flows for about 100km against a backdrop of imposing limestone mountains cloaked in dense forests, lush meadows rich in wildflowers and a clutch of small towns and villages, including Tolmin, Kobarid and Bovec. Besides its rich history - the WW1 Soca Front was one of the bloodiest mountain battles ever known - the valley is now a hiking, kayaking, and fly-fishing haven with much of the area set aside as part of the Triglav National Park.

BOKA WATERFALL

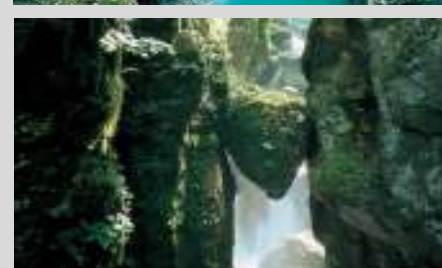
The waterfall Boka is one of the most fluid and generally the most magnificent waterfalls in our country. Here the waters gathered in the Kanin Mountains encounter a mighty threshold. Its volume varies depending on the season and precipitation, but Boka is most worth seeing in the late spring when the thick layers of snow melt on Kanin and up to a hundred tons of water per second falls into the depths. The waterfall falls freely 106 m and immediately after that another 30 m in an incline. The waterfall can be clearly seen from the road from Zaga to Bovec. From the curve on the other side of the bridge is the starting point of the path which ends directly above the source and it takes one hour and a half to get there.

KOBARID - a place of the biggest alpine battle in the I. world war

One of the most renowned historical places in Slovenia was already inhabited in the Hallstat period and prospered in the Roman period. The town is mainly known for the aftermath of the Battle of Kobarid in October 1917, which placed Kobarid on the world map. Kobarid is known for the famous Battle of Caporetto, where the Italian retreat was documented by Ernest Hemingway in his novel A Farewell to Arms. The battle is well documented in the museum in the centre of Kobarid. During the Second World War, Kobarid was the centre of the liberated territory, called the Kobarid Republic. The Kobarid museum presents the story of these historical events and in 1993 it received the Council of Europe Museum Award. Kobarid is also the culinary capital of the Primorska region, since it boasts many excellent restaurants.

TOLMIN GORGE

The chute on the Tolminka River is the lowest point in Triglav National Park and the longest chute in Slovenia. It is also among the deepest. The junction of the gorges of the Tolminka and Zadlascica rivers with their chutes is a unique phenomenon in Slovenia. The chute of the Tolminka River is about two hundred meters long and five to ten meters wide. The well-known "Devil's Bridge" over which the Tolmin - Cadrg road passes arches sixty meters above the Tolminka, and above it there is the entrance to the Dante Cave.



DAY 5

Breakfast in the hotel and check-out
Drive to Goriska Brda wine region
Stop at Gonjace viewing tower (75km)
Drive to Stekar winery and a wine tasting (Kojško, 1km)
Drive to Klinec winery (Medana, 8km) and free for lunch
Drive to Movia winery (Dobrovo, 2km) and a wine tasting
Drive to Bjana wine house (1km) and check-in
Free for dinner and overnight in Biljana

GORISKA BRDA

On the very Western corner of Slovenia there is beautiful wine growing region Goriska Brda stretching on 72 square km. It extends through the state border (Italy) from the river Soca on south-eastern part to the Idrija river on north-western part. The region ends with two old hills; Sabotin on East and Korada on North.

STEKAR HOMESTAD AND WINERY

Stekar farm is nestled in the gently sloping hills of Brda, surrounded by orchards and vineyards. The location is impressive and the view extends over a mosaic of vineyards and little villages. They grow orchards and vineyards in the organic way, producing healthy, authentic and delicious fruits and vegetables in harmony with nature. In the wine cellar they follow the idea of natural wine where nature has been left to take its course. The wines are full-bodied, complex and never uniform, without unnecessary additives and invasive technologies. Janko is also a master in brandy production.

KLINEC HOMESTEAD & WINERY

At the Klinec homestead they have been growing wine since 1918. Today they are cultivating 5 hectares while respecting the rules of biodynamic farming they avoid to use any substances which may harm the environment. Klinec wines have a unique individuality and a very high quality. Klinec homestead dining room is often filled with the aroma of minestrone, salami, white polenta, prosciutto in red wine and a series of regional specialties.

MOVIA WINERY

Movia is one of the most exclusive and worldwide known wine producers in Slovenia. The wine estate has existed since the 18th century, although it became the property of the Kristancic family in 1820. The estate extends over 22 hectares of land, about half of which lie on the Italian side of the Goriska Brda (Collio). On the world market today, Movia is a synonym for wines with impressive character and extraordinary elegance. Their wines are produced with the highest measure of respect towards nature, no fining, no filtration. The Brda's characteristic white wines are gentle, balanced, fresh, vivacious most age well. Red wines of good vintages have a very strong colour and a pronounced extract, developing into an elegant harmony and completeness of flavour and bouquet as the wines age.

BJANA WINE HOUSE

Wine cellar Bjana, located at village Biljana is specialized in production of top quality sparkling wines (classical method). Although Miran Sirk's production is based on long tradition, Bjana is a relatively new trade name. Sirk named his wines after the oldest wine cellar in the Brda area: the Bjana cellar is a 400-year-old architectural masterpiece that Miran Sirk has renovated with great respect for history. Bjana sparkling wines are made from the traditional Rebula complemented by the liveliness of the more modern Chardonnay, and the Modri Pinot. Bottled wines with added liqueur de tirage are aged for at least eighteen months and the remuage is done manually although Sirk will eventually install mechanical pulpites in keeping with modern trends.



DAY 6

Breakfast in the hotel and check-out
Transfer to Vipava Valley
A visit of Sutor winery (53km)
Free for lunch at a local restaurant
Drive to Portoroz (82km)
Check-in to a hotel
Free for dinner
Overnight in Portoroz

VIPAVA VALLEY

It is an important corridor connecting Northern Italy to Central Europe and it is named by the omonymous river. Its main urban center is Ajdovscina. The valley is famous for the sometimes extremely strong Bora (Burja) wind, which is particularly strong in the area extending between the towns of Vipava and Ajdovscina and can speed up to 180 km/h. It is also renowned for its quality wines, especially white ones. Among white grapes, the most common varieties in the region are Chardonnay, Sauvignon and the autochthonous types Zelen, Pinela and Vitovska Garganja, while red varieties include Merlot, Barbera and Cabernet Sauvignon.

SUTOR WINERY

The farm fits in the architecture of Podraga village typical of Primorska: narrow streets, stone walls, small windows with frames, stones on the roofs. The cellars on the farm were built at the end of the 19th century. Podraga is one of the first villages in this area that cultivates the vine. Viticulture is in a balance there, the conditions are extreme. It is the first meeting of the Alps and the sea. A good wine grows in the vineyard, the cellar can only preserve it. The Sutor family works with sense, very traditionally and without unnecessary additives because they want for their wines to be honest and sincere. The varieties of wine they produce are: Chardonnay, Malvasia, Sauvignon and Merlot.

PORTOROZ – the Slovenian Monte Carlo

Sea, wind, salt, Mediterranean odours, palms, roses and evergreen plants, relaxation, entertainment and companionship are the words, with which we can easily introduce Portoroz, a seaside resort in the heart of Europe. The intermingling of various cultures and music expressions, nature, culinary delights and turbulent historical events, create an atmosphere, in which the everyday life stress and tensions disappear in a relaxed state of mind. The relaxing stroll on the shoreline, recuperating run on the beach, swimming in the sea and pools, beauty and health programmes in spas or sports and recreational activities, will fill you with new energy. Portoroz is a great departure point for the sailing in the Adriatic.



DAY 7

Breakfast in the hotel
Drive to Koper (17km) for a sightseeing
Drive to Rojac winery (10km) and a wine tasting
Free for lunch at a local restaurant
Drive to Korenika & Moskon winery (5km) and a wine tasting
Return to Portoroz (7km)
Free for dinner
Overnight in Portoroz



KOPER - Mediterranean as it used to be

Carved grey Istrian limestone, eight squares situated at the outer edge of the town covered with a carpet of white stone, eleven other squares, remnants of an ancient city wall, narrow intertwining streets leading to the main square, boasting the largest cathedral in Slovenia - all this narrates the story of the past and of the present moment. Step by step the facades of the buildings and their interiors reveal the millennial history of Koper, once Lustinopolis, Capris, evoke the era of the Venetian Republic, the golden age of the Gothic and Renaissance - up to the present moment.

ROJAC WINERY

Bruno Rojac, the father behind the story of Rojac wines spent his youth among the vines and olive trees of Istria. After a decade of work as an agronomic consultant and a business traveller, the time was ripe for the accomplishment of his life philosophy – having his own wine yards. His firstborn son, Uros, also fell in love with the wine legend, so Bruno and Uros kept hatching new schemes and thus developed a characteristic style of wines that are strong, rich with characteristics of earth, climate, culture and of course, a human hand. All of this gave Rojac wines a broad recognition. Uros amalgamated his father's knowledge about wine-growing and enology with a system of wine producing that was brought by Istrian grandfathers. Doing that, he won great recognition in the Slovenian wine area. The Rojac vineyards are not fertilized by mineral fertilizers but by the sensible use of fertilizers based on sulphur and copper, which help to preserve the biological grape production. Their vineyards are planted on five different micro locations: Stari d'or, Baredi, Raven, Stena, Ronkaldo.

WINERY KORENIKA & MOSKON

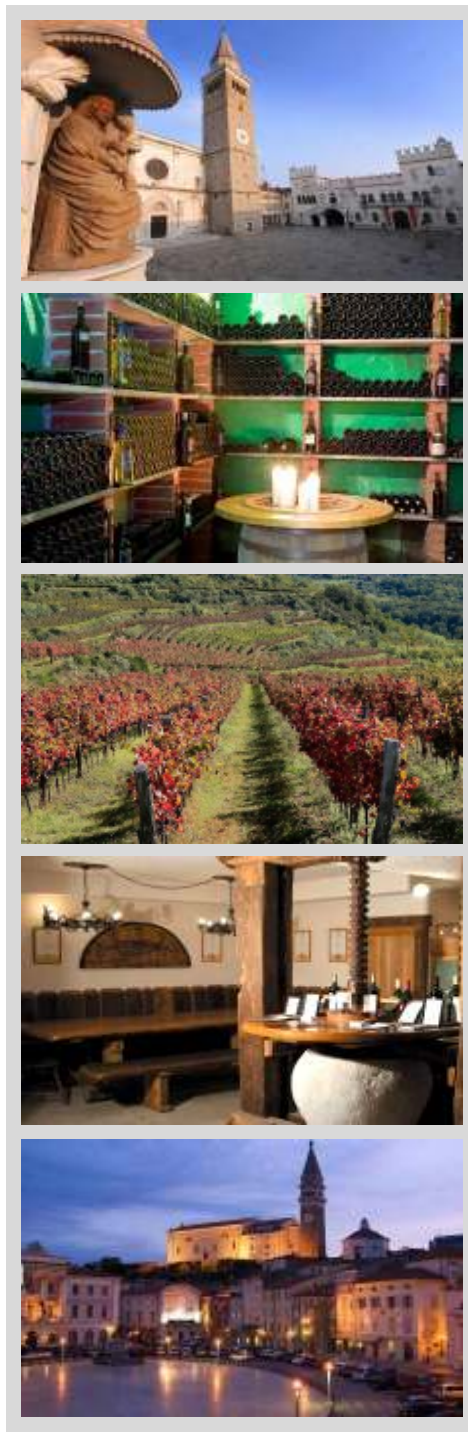
This winery is located in Slovenian Istria. Wine cellar was established in 1984 and founded by Korenika Miran and his partner Ignac Moskon. They had a long tradition in wine growing and winemaking. Gorund Kortinca's first vineyard was planted by Malvasia variety. Today this ground is planted by Refosk and Cabernet Sauvignon. Ground Bankina is located in the heart of the Valley of Secovlje, with a constant breeze. Their oldest Malvasia is cultivated here, it is a wine full of sun and sea. On ground Paderno they are growing Muscat, Malvasia and Chardonnay, which excels in its rich body, elegant bouquet and constant acidity. Kalcinar is a ground in the heart of the sea. It is the home of Pinot Blanc and aromatic Sauvignon with the aroma of elder blossoms and melon.

PIRAN - historical gem on Slovenian coast

Piran, a typical Mediterranean town designated by a lovely St. Georges Church and square, named after Piran's most famous citizen - musician Giuseppe Tartini. It is situated at the cape of the Piran peninsula on the Northern side of Istria. The town is actually one large museum with the medieval architecture and rich culture heritage. Narrow streets and tight houses form a special charm of the town. Piran is also an administrative centre of the local area and important Slovenian tourist centre.

DAY 8

Breakfast in the hotel
Day at leisure or half day excursion to salt pans
Free for dinner
Overnight in Portoroz



SECOVLJE SALTPANS

The Secovlje salts flats are the northernmost salt flats in the Mediterranean. The salt is produced in the traditional way based on a 700-year-old method that harmonizes man and nature. Over the centuries, a unique habitat has formed for halophytic plants and animals and migrating birds. The cultural heritage, which reflects centuries of work by salt makers, is extremely rich and measures 6.5 square km. There are no settlements in the park.



DAY 9

Breakfast in the hotel and check-out
Drive to Postojna caves (60km)
Drive to Ljubljana airport (85km) for your departure flight

MARVELLOUS POSTOJNA CAVES – the most visited caves in Europe

The Postojna cave system is the largest known cave system in Slovenia. A visit to a cave such as Postojna deserves full attention due to the diversity of shapes, expansive cave areas, stalactite and stalagmite formations and water characteristics. Admire its unique Karst underground world of beautiful formations of stalactites and stalagmites. You can also see an unusual and rare underground animal Proteus Anguinus - the so-called "human fish". A visit to Postojna cave is a special experience, as an electric train takes visitors to their hour and a half circle tour visit to the cave. From train station inside the cave guides accompany visitors as they walk amongst magnificent creations of nature.



SERVICES

SERVICES INCLUDED:

TRANSFERS:

Air conditioned vehicle through the whole tour with driver/guide including parking fees, pay tolls

ACCOMMODATION (in DBL or SGL room, breakfast included):

2 nights in 4* hotel in Ljubljana based on BB, 2 nights in 4* boutique hotel in Soca Valley based on HB, 1 night in one of the wineries in Goriska Brda based on HB, 3 nights in 5* hotel in Portoroz based on BB

GUIDES:

English speaking guide through the whole tour including meals and accommodation

ENTRANCE FEES:

Visits and tasting of 3-sorts of wine at Stekar winery, Klinec winery, Movia winery, Bjana winery, Sutor winery, Rojac winery, Korenika&Moskon winery, visit of Ptuj castle, Postojna caves, Pletna boat ride to Bled island, St Mary's Church at Bled Island, Bled castle, Tolmin gorge

OTHER:

Organization of the tour and VAT

SERVICES EXCLUDED:

- Services not mentioned in the program
- Meals unless where specified
- Porterage
- Tips