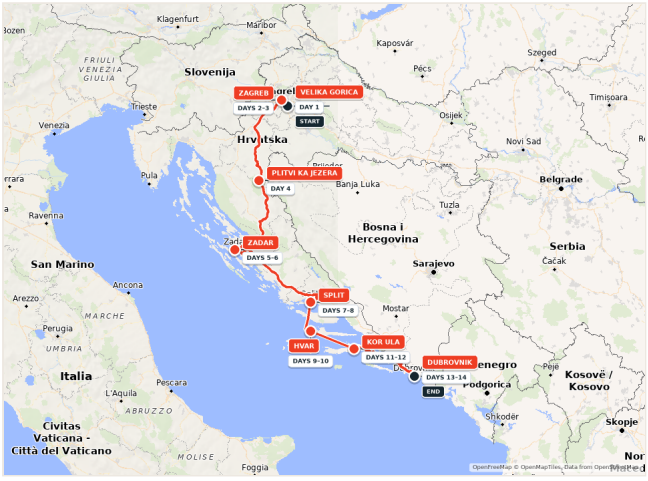
ENCOUNTERS TRAVEL

Your passport to adventure

Self-Drive Classic Tour Through Croatia

COUNTRY(IES)	Croatia
TOUR TYPE	Overland
TRANSPORT	Self-drive rental car
GROUP SIZE	Min: 0 | Max: 0
DURATION	14 days
STARTS	Zagreb, Croatia
ENDS	Dubrovnik, Croatia
MEALS	Breakfasts - 13, Lunches - 0, Dinners - 0

TOUR ROUTE MAP **14 Days**



ROUTE: **Velika Gorica** (Start) → **Zagreb** → **Plitvi Ka Jezera** → **Zadar** → **Split** → **Hvar** → **Kor Ula** → **Dubrovnik** (End)

HIGHLIGHTS

TBC

Itinerary

DAY 1 Zagreb Airport – Zagreb (15km, 20min)

Drive from Zagreb Airport into the Croatian capital after collecting the rental car, then settle into the hotel and keep the rest of the day free. Zagreb's compact centre can be explored independently on foot, with restaurants and major sights close together. The pace allows each stop to be enjoyed without rushing before continuing to the next destination. Enjoy the journey at a relaxed pace.

ACTIVITIES

- **Self-Drive from Zagreb Airport to Zagreb**
  Drive from Zagreb Airport to Zagreb in your rental car, continuing the self-drive journey through the surrounding countryside.
- **Zagreb at Leisure**
  Spend free time in Zagreb at your own pace, with the compact city centre, restaurants and main sights easy to explore independently.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Zagreb	None

DAY 2 Zagreb full day

Meet the local guide on Ban Jelačić Square and walk through Zagreb's oldest streets, passing the Cathedral, Tkalčićeva Street, Stone Gate and colourful St Mark's Church. Learn about the noon cannon at Lotrščak Tower, then take the funicular down to Lower Town. Afterwards, continue exploring the city's boulevards, shops, cafés or museums independently. Enjoy the journey at a relaxed pace.

ACTIVITIES

- **Discover Zagreb on Foot**
  Meet a local guide on Ban Jelačić Square and explore Zagreb's historic streets, key Upper Town sights and the funicular to Lower Town.
- **Zagreb at Leisure**
  Spend free time in Zagreb at your own pace, with the compact city centre, restaurants and main sights easy to explore independently.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Zagreb	Breakfast

DAY 3 Zagreb – Plitvice Lakes (130km, 1h 50min)

Drive south from Zagreb towards Plitvice Lakes, breaking the journey at Rastoke to see its watermills, small waterfalls and river channels. Continue to Plitvice Lakes National Park and collect tickets at Entrance 1, then choose a marked walking route through the linked lakes, cascades and forests. Lunch remains flexible, with a picnic or park restaurant chosen independently.

ACTIVITIES

- **Self-Drive from Zagreb to Plitvice Lakes National Park**
  Travel by rental car from Zagreb to Plitvice Lakes National Park, following the planned road journey and watching the landscape change along the way.
- **Discover Rastoke Village**
  Stop in Rastoke to see the riverside village where old watermills and waterfalls sit around the meeting of the Slunjčica and Korana rivers.
- **Discover Plitvice Lakes National Park**
  Enter Plitvice Lakes National Park at Entrance 1 and choose a walking route through its linked lakes, waterfalls and forested scenery.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Plitvice National Park	Breakfast

DAY 4 Plitvice Lakes – Zadar (120km, 1h 30min)

Drive from Plitvice Lakes towards Zadar on the Adriatic coast, then spend the afternoon exploring the historic centre and waterfront independently. Walk along the Riva and seek out landmarks such as the old city gate and Church of St Donatus. As evening approaches, head to the Sea Organ and Greeting to the Sun for the sunset over the islands and open water. beside the Adriatic.

ACTIVITIES

- **Self-Drive from Plitvice Lakes National Park to Zadar**
  Leave Plitvice Lakes National Park by rental car and continue to Zadar, covering this overland section at your own pace before the next stop.
- **Discover Zadar Old Town and Waterfront**
  Explore Zadar independently, strolling the Riva and old centre to see landmarks such as the city gate and Church of St Donatus.
- **Sunset at Zadar Sea Organ**
  End the day on Zadar's waterfront, where the Sea Organ and Greeting to the Sun provide a memorable setting for the Adriatic sunset.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Zadar	Breakfast

DAY 5 Zadar full day (daily trip to Kornati)

Take a full-day boat trip from Zadar into Kornati National Park, travelling among the dense cluster of islands and seeing cliffs, dry-stone walls and beaches from the water. Swimming opportunities are part of the day, so bring suitable gear if you want to enter the sea. Aperitifs, sandwiches, lunch, wine and juice are served during the cruise before returning to Zadar.

ACTIVITIES

- **Cruising Through Kornati National Park**
  Take a full-day boat trip from Zadar into Kornati National Park, with island scenery, swimming opportunities and food and drinks served aboard.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Zadar	Breakfast

DAY 6 Zadar – Krka National Park (76km, 55min) – Šibenik (12km, 17min) – Split (87km, 1h 5min)

Drive from Zadar to Krka National Park and walk the wooden paths around Skradinski Buk, passing waterfalls, river islands and green pools. Continue to Šibenik for time around the Cathedral of St James and the surrounding old town, then return to the road for the final journey south to Split. This creates a varied journey with a natural balance between travel, sightseeing and time outdoors.

ACTIVITIES

- **Self-Drive from Zadar to Krka National Park**
  Continue the self-drive journey from Zadar to Krka National Park, using the rental car for this road section between the two locations.
- **Discover Krka National Park**
  Walk through Krka National Park around Skradinski Buk, following wooden paths beside waterfalls, river islands and emerald pools.
- **Self-Drive from Krka National Park to Šibenik**
  Drive from Krka National Park to Šibenik in your rental car, continuing the self-drive journey through the surrounding countryside.
- **Discover Šibenik Old Town**
  Stop in Šibenik to explore the historic centre, beginning around the UNESCO-listed Cathedral of St James and nearby Venetian-era streets.
- **Self-Drive from Šibenik to Split**
  Travel by rental car from Šibenik to Split, following the planned road journey and watching the landscape change along the way.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Split	Breakfast

DAY 7 Split full day

Join the local guide in Peristyle Square and explore Split's historic core around Diocletian's Palace, the Cathedral of St Domnius and the old-town lanes. After the guided walk, continue through the centre independently and spend time along the palm-lined Riva waterfront. The route balances independent driving with time to enjoy the main sights at a comfortable pace. Take time to enjoy each stop.

ACTIVITIES

- **Discover Split on Foot**
  Join a local guide in Peristyle Square to explore Diocletian's Palace, the Cathedral of St Domnius and Split's maze of old-town lanes.

- **Split at Leisure**
  Spend free time exploring Split independently, with the old-town lanes, cafés and palm-lined Riva available at your own pace.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Split	Breakfast

DAY 8 Split – Hvar (62km, 2h)

Visit Split's Green Market in the morning to browse the fruit, vegetables and local produce beside Diocletian's Palace. Continue to the ferry port and cross the Adriatic to Hvar, then settle into the hotel after arrival. The rest of the day is free to discover Hvar town at your own pace, whether wandering the stone streets, waterfront, cafés or harbour surroundings. Take time to enjoy each stop.

ACTIVITIES

- **Discover Split Green Market**
  Browse Split's Green Market beside Diocletian's Palace, where fruit, vegetables and local produce fill the lively morning stalls.
- **Ferry Crossing from Split to Hvar**
  Take the ferry from Split to Hvar, crossing the Adriatic as the self-drive journey continues to the next island stop.
- **Hvar at Leisure**
  Spend free time in Hvar after arrival, exploring the harbour town, stone streets, cafés and waterfront independently at your own pace.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Hvar	Breakfast

DAY 9 Hvar full day (day trip to Green and Blue cave)

Depart Hvar around mid-morning for a full day at sea, beginning with the Green Cave and continuing to the hidden inlet of Stiniva. Visit the Blue Cave, then spend free time on Vis before travelling on to the Pakleni Islands and returning to Hvar in the early evening. Entrance fees for both caves are paid locally in cash and are not included in the boat-trip price. Take time to enjoy each stop.

ACTIVITIES

- **Hvar Caves & Islands Cruise**
  Take a day boat trip from Hvar to the Green Cave, Stiniva, Blue Cave, Vis and the Pakleni Islands, with cave entrance fees paid locally.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Hvar	Breakfast

DAY 10

Hvar – Korcula (62km, 1h 40min)

Take the ferry from Hvar to Korčula and continue the island-hopping journey along the Dalmatian coast. After arrival, settle in and keep the afternoon and evening free to discover Korčula independently. Wander among grey-stone houses, churches and squares, or choose from the town's restaurants, taverns, shops and bars without a fixed sightseeing schedule. Enjoy the journey at a relaxed pace.

ACTIVITIES

- **Ferry Crossing from Hvar to Korčula**
  Travel by ferry from Hvar to Korčula, enjoying the Adriatic crossing before continuing the island section of the journey.
- **Korčula at Leisure**
  Use the afternoon and evening to explore Korčula independently, wandering its stone streets, squares, shops, restaurants and waterfront.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Korcula	Breakfast

DAY 11

Korcula full day

Explore Korčula's medieval old town with a local guide, following its distinctive fishbone street layout and learning about the limestone architecture and strategic position of the settlement. Stop at the museum and St Mark's Cathedral, then visit the traditional Marco Polo birthplace. The pace allows each stop to be enjoyed without rushing before continuing to the next destination.

ACTIVITIES

- **Discover Korčula Old Town on Foot**
  Explore Korčula's medieval old town with a local guide, visiting the museum, St Mark's Cathedral and the traditional Marco Polo birthplace.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Korcula	Breakfast

DAY 12

Korcula – Ston (66km, 1h 50min) – Dubrovnik (55km, 55min)

Take the car ferry from Dominče to Orebić and continue across the Pelješac Peninsula towards Ston. Afterwards, drive on to Dubrovnik, check into the hotel and use the remaining time to begin exploring the city at your own

pace. This creates a varied journey with a natural balance between travel, sightseeing and time outdoors. Enjoy the journey at a relaxed pace. Take time to enjoy each stop.

ACTIVITIES

- **Ferry Crossing from Dominče to Orebić**
  Board the ferry at Dominče for Orebić, making the sea crossing that links the next stage of the self-drive holiday.
- **Pause in Ston**
  Stop in Ston on the Pelješac Peninsula, with time for its historic setting and the chance to buy local oysters or mussels independently.
- **Self-Drive from Ston to Dubrovnik**
  Leave Ston by rental car and continue to Dubrovnik, covering this overland section at your own pace before the next stop.
- **Dubrovnik at Leisure**
  Enjoy free time in Dubrovnik to wander the historic streets, relax by the waterfront, visit nearby beaches or explore independently at your own pace.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Dubrovnik	Breakfast

DAY 13 — Full day Dubrovnik

Meet the local guide at Pile Gate and explore Dubrovnik's old town, passing Onofrio's Fountain, Rector's Palace, Luža Square, St Blaise's Church and café-lined streets. Continue onto the defensive city walls for elevated views across the roofs and Adriatic. The afternoon is then free for independent exploration or nearby beaches, while the Mount Srđ cable car remains a suggestion.

ACTIVITIES

- **Discover Dubrovnik Old Town on Foot**
  Meet a local guide at Pile Gate and explore Dubrovnik's old town, including Onofrio's Fountain, Rector's Palace and Luža Square.
- **Experience Dubrovnik City Walls**
  Walk Dubrovnik's defensive city walls for elevated views across the tiled roofs, old town and Adriatic coastline.
- **Dubrovnik at Leisure**
  Enjoy free time in Dubrovnik to wander the historic streets, relax by the waterfront, visit nearby beaches or explore independently at your own pace.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Dubrovnik	Breakfast

DAY 14

Dubrovnik – Dubrovnik Airport (22km, 30min)

Drive from Dubrovnik to Dubrovnik Airport for the final self-drive journey of the tour. Leave the city according to the flight schedule, follow the coastal road towards the airport and return the rental car before checking in for the onward flight. The experience flows naturally from one stop to the next, with time to enjoy the setting along the way. Enjoy the journey at a relaxed pace.

ACTIVITIES

- **Self-Drive from Dubrovnik to Dubrovnik Airport**
  Continue the self-drive journey from Dubrovnik to Dubrovnik Airport, using the rental car for this road section between the two locations.
- **Tour Ends at Dubrovnik Airport**
  Your tour concludes at Dubrovnik Airport. From here, continue independently with your onward travel arrangements.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
N/A	Breakfast

INCLUDED	EXCLUDED
TBC	TBC

Tour Options

Our tours are designed to include all that you need to enjoy a really special time in the destination you're visiting. However, we do also offer some extra options to complement the tour and add some additional sightseeing or activities, or some extra time at either end of the tour.

All accommodation based options (e.g. Single supplements, extra nights, cruise upgrades) should be booked and paid for in advance so that we can make the appropriate arrangements. Other options may either be booked and paid for in advance or while you are on the tour, though we recommend booking in advance to ensure there are no issues with availability.

Many options are priced the same throughout the year, but some may incur single or high season supplements , full details are given on the tour reservation form or on request.

No additional options available for this tour.

Important Notes

1 Booking & Payment

If you would like to book a place on this tour, please complete the online reservation form on our website (via the Dates & Prices tab on the tour page). You may make a deposit or full payment online, or just hold a reservation if you prefer (full payments are due 8 weeks before departure). We will then contact you with more details about how to complete your booking. Payments may be made by debit or credit card (subject to a card processing fee), or by making a bank transfer, or posting us a cheque/bank draft. Full details will be provided in your booking confirmation email. Please contact us if you would like any more information or have any questions before making a booking.

2 Financial Security

We are a UK registered company and are committed to providing our customers with financial protection to provide peace of mind and to allow you to book with confidence.
We have therefore partnered with Trust My Travel Ltd., which provides financial protection services to over 2000 partners around the world. Funds paid to us by our customers are protected via an Insurance policy held by Trust My Travel. Each traveller and the description of services sold is declared against Trust My Travel's insurance policy directly against our financial failure. In the event of our insolvency, you will be refunded for any unfulfilled products and/or repatriation to the UK (where applicable). Please see our website or booking conditions for more information.

3 Responsible Tourism

It is impossible not to have an impact on the local environment, cultures and eco-systems when you travel. However, it is very possible to try and ensure that these impacts are as limited, or positive as possible. We are committed to ensuring that we try to leave our host countries in a better state than we found them and encourage and assist our travellers to help us with this.
The following are a few simple tips that require very little effort on your part but which will help ensure that any effect you have on the locations you visit is positive rather than negative.

- Don't prejudge: Things in different countries will almost certainly be different. That doesn't make them worse or inferior, just different.
- Communicate: Don't expect locals to speak your language. Take the trouble to learn a few words or phrases of the local language. Don't worry about sounding silly. Most locals are patient and accommodating and appreciate you making the effort to communicate in their language.
- Conserve energy: Be careful not to waste valuable resources. Use local resources sparingly. Switch off lights, air-conditioning and fans when you leave the hotel room and don't waste water. Remove superfluous packaging. Many countries have far less efficient waste disposal systems than ours. Remove packaging from newly acquired items before leaving home.

- Don't litter: No matter how untidy or dirty the country you're travelling in may look to you, avoid littering, as there is no need to add to the environment's stress. Many of the countries we visit have a tough challenge dealing with rubbish and waste. Please consider taking home as much plastic waste as you can (e.g. water bottles).
- Choose environmentally friendly products: By using environmentally friendly (bio degradable) sun creams, shampoos and detergents you can help reduce pollution.
- Respect local customs and traditions: As you are a guest in these countries, you should also comply with the local customs. If you are friendly and well mannered, the locals will reciprocate and it will only enhance your experience. It's important to follow dress and behaviour guidelines especially when visiting religious or sacred sites (your tour leader will advise you how best to do this).
- If a client commits an illegal act the client may be excluded from the tour and Encounters Travel shall cease to have responsibility to/for them. No refund will be given for any unused services.

All porters are employed and equipped following guidelines set by the International Porter Protection Group (IPPG).

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4 Follow Us Online

You can stay in touch with us online by following us on Facebook and Twitter. We post updates on relevant travel news in our destination countries, special offers and discounts and other interesting travel related news and information.

www.facebook.com/encounterstravel

https://x.com/encounterstravl (yes, without the 'e')

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5 Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory on all of our tours and needs to cover personal accident & liability, medical expenses and repatriation, travel delay & abandonment. We also strongly recommend that you take out cover against cancellation and lost/stolen baggage. Personal medical insurance does not normally provide sufficient cover and is generally not suitable for travel on our tours. You will not be able to join your tour if you have not provided us with details of your insurance or if you arrive without cover in place (no refunds will be due in this event).

Considering travel insurance for your trip? World Nomads Travel Insurance offers coverage for more than 150 adventure activities as well as emergency medical, lost luggage, trip cancellation and more.

If your tour includes car hire, or if you plan to arrange a hot air balloon flight locally or do some scuba diving during your tour, you should check the small print in your policy to make sure these are covered (these are covered in our policy). Please also check the maximum altitude that you will be reaching and that full cover including emergency evacuation is provided up to this altitude.

If you are taking expensive camera gear or other electronic equipment with you then please check the coverage and the fine print of your policy to ensure that you have sufficient cover.

IMPORTANT: We must have your travel insurance details (policy number and type of insurance) before you depart or you may not be allowed to join the tour. If you haven't told us already, please let us know the details when you

can. You should take a paper copy of your insurance policy with you as you may be asked to show this at the start of the tour.

Covid-19

Before purchasing any travel insurance, please check the coverage provided for situations related to Covid-19, and for the rules about government travel advice. Your normal policy may not be suitable.

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6 Before you travel

It is important when considering and preparing to travel anywhere in the world that you have a good understanding of the country you are visiting, its laws and customs, and the possible risks and situations that may occur. This includes specific risks related to your itinerary (eg. does it involve water & can you swim, are you fit enough for the activities included), as well as more general risks such as terrorism and natural disasters.

General details and links to more information about health risks, visa requirements, money, and travel insurance are given in these tour notes. We recommend that you re-read all these before your departure as well as the small print of your travel insurance policy so you know exactly what is covered and what is not.

You should take copies of your important travel documents with you and ideally also store them online securely as a backup. Make sure that you have given us your emergency contact details and told that person where and when you are travelling. Ensure you take enough money with you and that you have access to emergency funds.

Finally, you should read through and stay updated with the current official government travel advice for your destination. We are registered partners with the UK Foreign Office's 'Travel Aware' campaign which provides further useful and invaluable information.

travel aware
gov.uk/travelaware

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7 Reduce Plastic Waste with Water-to-Go Filter bottles

Traveling responsibly means minimizing plastic waste, but staying hydrated on the go is essential. At Encounters Travel we are committed to reducing single-use plastics, which is why we've partnered with Water-to-Go. Their portable filtration system removes over 99.9% of contaminants from any non-saltwater source, turning even questionable water sources into safe drinking water.

Given that tap water is un-safe to drink in many of the countries in which we operate, we recommend purchasing a Water-to-Go bottle prior to departure. This will help you avoid the use of single use plastic bottles and keep you hydrated on the go.

Save big! Get a huge 25% off your Water-to-Go bottle and other Water-to-Go products (such as filters, lids, and carriers). Use code **ENCOUNTERS25** at checkout (valid in the UK, USA and Canada).

How Water-to-Go Technology works:

- Their reusable, BPA free water bottles contain their own unique 3-in-1 filtration technology effectively providing clean safe drinking water from any non-salt water source around the world.
- Three different (1 traditional and 2 nano) technologies are combined in one filter cartridge to remove up to 99.9999% of microbiological contaminants in water.

The three technologies used in a Water-to-Go filter are:

- Mechanical filtration – A tiny pore size, so small contaminants can't fit through.
- Electrical – A positive charge reduces the pore size even further and attracts contaminants like a magnet, trapping them inside the filter.
- Activated Carbon – Unlike most carbon based filters, instead of using adhesives to glue the carbon particles together, (which vastly reduces the carbon's efficiency) it is contained within the membrane, helping to reduce contaminants whilst eliminating bad tastes and odours. Try filtering water from your tap at home and taste the difference!

Water-to-Go filter bottles deliver safe, healthy water worldwide

- Water-to-Go filters remove bacteria, viruses, waterborne disease, protozoa, heavy metals such as lead as well as harmful chemicals.
- Their filters remove Chlorine and Fluoride from tap water.
- The filter will eliminate harmful contaminants from the water but allow beneficial minerals such as sodium and magnesium to pass through leaving you with the healthiest water possible.
- Water-to-Go filters have been independently tested against internationally recognised standards by industry specialists including The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (UK), BCS Laboratories (USA), Bangalore Test House (India) and IMI (China).

Use Water-to-Go products and you'll be healthier, wealthier and helping to make the world a better place!

- Depending on filter size, each Water-to-Go filter is able to replace 260 or 400 single-use plastic water bottles!
- They ensure you have access to safe water anywhere in the world without ever having to buy environmentally damaging bottled water.
- Their water bottles deliver safe, clean drinking water at just 5p per litre.
- The filter membrane is biodegradable and the shrouds are recyclable.
- The water bottles are used and approved by everyone from backpackers to commuters, gym users to expecting mums. Perfect for everyday, outdoor and travel.

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8 Private & Tailor-made Tours

While our group departures offer a fantastic way to explore with like-minded travellers, we understand that some guests prefer a more exclusive experience. Most of our group tours can be booked on a private basis, allowing you to enjoy the same expert-led routes with your own dedicated party. The primary advantage of choosing a private arrangement is the flexibility it provides; we can easily customise the itinerary to include your preferred style of

accommodation or adjust the pace to suit your needs. Private tours can be run on the same start days as our group tours, or on other dates. However, some activities within our trips are restricted to particular days of the week - we will advise you on anything like this that we need to work around. Pricing will be based on the number of travellers in your party, and any customisations you may like to make.

For those seeking something truly unique, our specialist sales team is available to collaborate with you on a completely tailor-made tour, designed from the ground up to match your specific interests, accommodation level and requirements.

To request a quotation for a private or tailor-made tour, please contact us.

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9 Voltage

Sockets are two round pronged and 220 volts (Type C). Universal adaptors are available in most airport shops if you don't have one already. Standard European adapters will work fine, though sometimes they may feel a little loose in the sockets. All hotel rooms have electrical sockets where you can re-charge cameras, phones etc. Hair dryers are normally available on request from the hotel reception if not in your room already.
If you have US appliances (110 volts) you will need a voltage converter as well as a plug adapter.

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10 Transport

Our trips feature a mix of different transport options. We want you to feel like you're really experiencing the country you're travelling through, but at the same time we want you to finish journeys refreshed enough to enjoy the next stage of the tour. The distances involved when travelling around the Balkans mean that we use private vehicles and tourist coaches throughout this tour.

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11 Transfers

Our tours in the Balkans include your arrival and departure airport-hotel transfers and all other transfers.

Your airport transfers are only included on the first and last day of the set tour itinerary, plus on any additional days if you book your hotel room with us. If you make your own arrangements for additional accommodation at either the beginning or the end of the tour then you will need to arrange your own airport transfers on these days.

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12 International Flights

We want to give you as much flexibility as possible when it comes to booking your holiday with us. So, to take account of people with varying travel plans, we don’t normally include international flights in the main tour price. We are however very happy to suggest flights to go with the tour. Please contact us with your preferred dates and departure airport and we’ll give you a selection of airlines, times and fares to choose from.

Your airport arrival & departure transfers are included on the first and last days of the tour. Please check your your itinerary carefully for more information on where you should book your international flight into and out of as many of our Balkans tours start and end in different locations.

We do also sometimes advertise flight inclusive packages from selected airports. Where these are shown on our website, prices are correct at the time of quoting, but are subject to continued availability of the fare used. Prices will be reconfirmed at the time of booking, and we will also provide the flight times and airline details before tickets are issued.

Flight inclusive prices are based on the cheapest Economy ticket class available which is generally non-refundable and non-changeable unless the flight is cancelled for reasons such as Covid-19, in which case the airlines are more flexible. More flexible ticket options, as well as Premium Economy and Business Class tickets are available on request for an additional supplement. Any changes made to flight inclusive bookings will be subject to the airline rules on your ticket.

Flight CO2 Emissions:

Traveling by air is an amazing way to explore the world, but flights also contribute to carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions that impact the environment. By considering the airline's CO2 emissions when you choose your flight, you can help minimize your travel footprint.

When selecting your international flights and airline, we do therefore recommend that you try and also take into account the flight CO2 emissions. Some airlines and flight search websites (eg. Google Flights, Skyscanner) do publish this information, so you can compare between your flight options and make an informed decision. Thankfully, many airlines are working towards sustainability efforts, and choosing a greener option allows you to contribute to positive change while still enjoying your incredible adventure.

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13 Group Size/Tour Leaders/Guides

We are committed to being a small group operator, as we feel this gives everyone in the group the best chance to get to know their fellow travellers and to hear and make the most of their guide. There's no point in us providing great guides if you';ve got to peer over 30-40 shoulders to see them! So, we won't ever put you in a 50-seater coach with 49 other people and just one guide. Instead, we set our group departures in the Balkans to have a maximum of 20 travellers.

On these tours we provide a fully trained, local English-speaking guide for all of the sightseeing tours. Our local reps in some of the towns and cities en-route are also at your service. At Encounters Travel we try to use local guides and reps as much as possible. We feel this gives you the best experience of the country and the sites you are seeing.

Please note that as we offer multiple tours in the Balkans you may be joined by new passenger part way through the tour or some passengers may only choose to day a part of the tour. Therefore the group size may change mid-way through your tour.

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14 Entrance fees, Hotel fees & permits

Our Small Group tours in the Balkans do not include entrance fees to the tourist sites mentioned in the itinerary. We do however normally include these in prices for Tailor-Made and Escorted tours. Please check the Inclusions and Exclusions section below the tour itinerary for details about your tour and the amount you may need to budget. This amount is subject to change and will be reconfirmed at the start of your tour.

Greece Hotel Residence Fees: The Hellenic National Tourism Organization has announced that a residence fee will be applied on all hotel accommodation, starting from 1st January 2018. The fees must be paid by guests directly to the hotel before the end of their stay and are therefore not included in the tour price. Fees are per room per night (not per person) and have been set at EUR 1.50 for 3* hotels, EUR 3.00 for 4* hotels and EUR 4.00 for 5* hotels.

15 Tipping

Tipping is common practice in many Balkan countries, and is always appreciated when good service has been provided. For basic restaurants, taxis and local markets, leave the loose change. For more up-market restaurants we suggest 5% to 10% of your bill. We include a 'tipping kitty' in your tour price which your tour guide/leader will use to tip a wide range of people along the way to help ensure the smooth running of the tour. This does not include local guides, your tour guide/leader, driver(s) or transfer staff though.

Drivers: You may have a range of private drivers on your trip. For those you see for at least several days and who are more involved with the group, a tip of around EUR 1-2 per person per day is generally appropriate.

Tour guide/tour leader: If you think you tour guide and/or tour leader has worked hard and provided a good service then s/he will appreciate a tip of a few Euros. How much you tip is subject to your satisfaction with their service and your personal budget. You should not feel pressured to tip any particular amount. As a guideline, we can suggest that for good service, a tip of EUR 3-5 per day for local tour guides or local tour leaders would be fine.

16 Health and Vaccinations

You should ensure you are fully insured for medical emergencies including emergency evacuation and repatriation. EU travellers visiting other European Union countries including Croatia and Greece should also carry the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) as it entitles travellers to reduced cost, sometimes free, medical treatment in most European countries.

Recommended vaccinations and other health protection measures vary according to the country you are visiting and where you are travelling from. We recommend you contact your GP/medical practitioner or a travel clinic for current information on vaccinations needed for your destination.
You should ensure that you are up to date with vaccines and boosters recommended for your normal life at home, including for example, vaccines required for occupational risk of exposure, lifestyle risks and underlying medical conditions. No additional courses or boosters are normally recommended for this region though you could conside Tetanus and Tick-borne Encephalitis.

More information for the countries included in this region can be found using the following links: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia.
Malaria - there is low to no risk of malaria in this region, none in tourist areas.
Yellow fever certificates are not required.

17 Passports and Visas

Passports should be valid for at least six months after your departure from the country. Please do not bring an almost full or almost expired passport. Visa arrangements are the responsibility of the traveller, and requirements are subject to change by the local authorities.

Some foreign nationals require a visa to enter the countries included on our Balkan tours, though many do not (including UK, EU, US, CA, AU, NZ). More information for the specific countries included on our tours can be found using the links provided: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia.

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18 Time

The time in Albania is GMT plus 1 hour.

The time in Bosnia and Herzegovina is GMT plus 1 hour..

The time in Croatia is GMT plus 1 hour.

The time in Greece is GMT plus 1 hour.

The time in Macedonia is GMT plus 1 hour.

The time in Montenegro is GMT plus 1 hour.

The time in Serbia is GMT plus 1 hour.

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19 Money

Currencies:

The currency of Albania is the Albanian Lek (ALL), in Bosnia and Herzegovina the Mark (BAM), in Croatia the Kuna (HRK), in Greece the Euro (EUR), in Macedonia the Denar (MKD), in Montenegro they have adopted the Euro despite not being a member of the EU (EUR) and finally in Serbia the Dinar is used (RSD). If you intend on bringing local currency with you on your Balkan tour then the most widely accepted currency is the Euro which can be used in Greece and Montenegro and is easily converted in other countries. Alternatively you can consider withdrawing small amounts of cash from ATM's in each country on arrival, though we would recommend that you check this with your bank first to ensure they don't place any blocks on your card and to check transaction fees.

Spending Money:

It is difficult for us to specify the amount of money that you will spend per day, however, as a general rule EUR 25 to 50 per day can provide you with additional meals, tipping, snacks and drinks. Should you wish to purchase many souvenirs or other luxuries, of which there is a diverse range, you will have to budget for these.

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20 What to take

Luggage: Suitcases, rucksacks or fabric holdalls are all fine to bring with you on our Balkan tours. You should also bring a small daypack/bag to take out during the day. Your main luggage will normally be left in the hotel during your sightseeing trips or within the vehicle if you making stops between cities; you will not need to carry it far, and there are nearly always hotel porters to assist.

Luggage limits: There is no luggage limit for this tour, though since you are travelling around a lot we would normally recommend trying to bring as little as possible. Most airlines restrict you to between 20kg and 25kg for your hold luggage and between 5kg and 10kg for hand luggage. Please check with your airline before travelling to the airport.

Clothing: In the region from late March to May, spring brings with it average temperatures of around 15C, though the weather does gradually warm up with sunny days interspersed with rain showers. From May to the end of October, the climate is hot and sunny, getting cooler as the year progresses. By the end of October you can expect the first of the winter snows. So you must pack for cool and potentially wet conditions late in the year. Most of our tours to the Balkans take place during the summer months when shorts and t-shirts will be the general attire.

Other items: We also recommend you bring a sun hat, sunscreen, sunglasses, a basic first aid kit, toiletries, money belt, small torch, camera and charger.

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21 Dates & Prices

We run regular small-group departures on our Balkan tours between May and October. All departures are guaranteed to run with a minimum of 2 travellers and a maximum of 20. Departure dates and prices for your specific tour are listed on our website.
