

## 2025 Croatian Adriatic As it Used To Be



### A note from our Leaders - Marg Hurley & Peter Wood

What a wonderful trip with 20 compatible cyclists, the most fabulous guide, Alen Augustine, challenging rides in the heat with blue skies and sunshine everyday, exquisite scenery and our very dependable driver, Niko, who was always where you needed him to be. I don't think that I have ever been on a trip where we had such a cohesive group. That alone made for an exceptional vacation. Our two mountain bikers (now on rented hybrids) scared the rest of us with their top downhill speeds of 72 km/hour. I was afraid to even break 50 km/hour. Alen provided excellent overviews of each days ride and also enriched our limited knowledge of Croatia's history.

Six participants chose to ride e-bikes and thoroughly enjoyed the hilly terrain. Since they were faster than most of us, they had lots of coffee stops along the way. The only time I could pass an e-bike was on a descent.

Most of the ladies had "accidents" and arrived at dinner in newly purchased linen dresses, perfect for the warm evenings and much to the envy of those of us who couldn't find anything that fit.

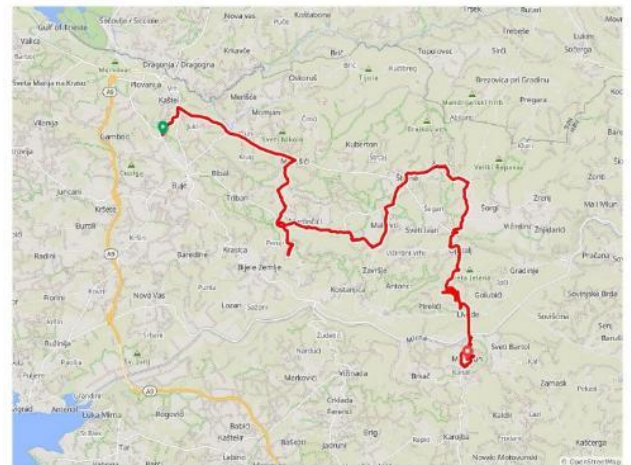
One of the very pleasant surprises was the fact that I never needed to use Google Translate as virtually all Croatians in the tourist industry spoke excellent English. Makes you feel very small when you can only speak one language.



## Croatia Daily Summaries - June 2025

### June 2 - Peter

The team, looking sharp in their **Team Sitnica jerseys**, departed at 9:00 AM, ready to roll. Our first stop, just 15 km into the ride, was the hilltop village of **Grožnjan**, where some riders picked up some local truffles. Leaving Grožnjan, one team took an unscheduled detour, riding 2 kilometers down a steep descent before realizing they were off-route, gaining some "extra exercise" in the process. We then continued our journey on quiet country roads, steadily gaining altitude over rolling hills, until we reached **Oprtalj** for lunch, where we enjoyed spectacular views. The afternoon brought an exhilarating 350-meter descent over 5 kilometers, followed by a 250-meter climb to **Motovun**. One rider (the author!) even managed to get lost finding the hotel. Despite the minor adventures, everyone arrived safely, and the bikes held up perfectly.



02.06. Parenzana - Motovun

**43.9 km**  
DISTANCE

**836 m**  
ELEVATION GAIN

**9.6 %**  
MAX GRADE



A special day cycling through Croatia's famous truffle country. The area is known for good wine but also as one of the few areas where people search for truffles. We cycled the rolling green landscapes that touch the Slovenian border before the day's last ascent to the imposing hill-top town of Motovun. Lots of history in and around this old fortress.

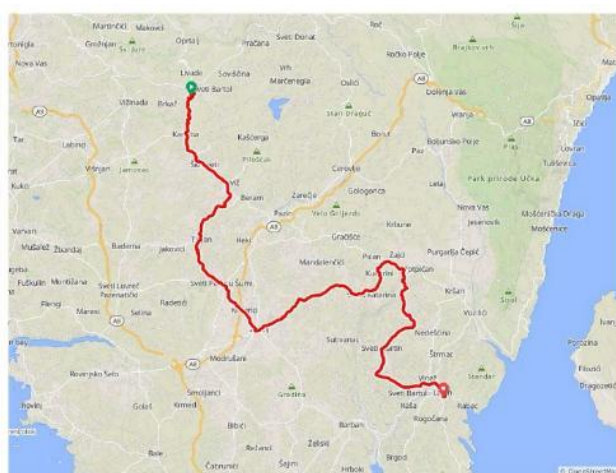




## June 3 - Fred

Tuesday, June 3rd—a day that will live in infamy! Well, perhaps not, but it was certainly the day the support van almost tumbled into a ditch. Unlike Humpty Dumpty, it didn't take all the King's horses and all the King's men; instead, two tow trucks were needed to safely return the van to the road. Fortunately, our lunch wasn't being transported by the van that day, and everyone was well-prepared to find food elsewhere—almost as if it were destined. There's even a video!

Aside from that excitement, the ride itself was challenging, leading us from one historic hilltop fort-village, **Motovun**, to another, **Labin**. The route was punctuated three-quarters of the way through by a thrilling 8.7 km downhill segment, descending 358 meters, unfortunately followed by a lengthy 3.9 km, 247-meter climb. This made the final 10 km of rolling hills feel surprisingly straightforward! Dinner offered many excellent options; some dispersed into the village center, while others opted for the hotel restaurant.



03.06. Motovun - Labin

71.6 km  
DISTANCE

1,143 m  
ELEVATION GAIN

12.7 %  
MAX GRADE



Quite a tough day while getting to know the Eastern coastline of the Istrian peninsula. Where the green hills meet the sea, where nature and heritage become one, you will find the old mediaeval towns of Labin and Rabac – paradise for artists.



## June 4 - Marion

Wednesday, June 4th, marked another sunny, warm day—our fourth day in Croatia and third day of cycling. We journeyed from the medieval town of **Labin**, perched on the cliffs of the Istrian Peninsula's eastern coastline, to the island of **Cres**, Croatia's second-largest island. From Labin, we cycled 29 km down to the ferry port of Brestova, still gaining 300 meters of elevation along the way. After our first ferry ride of the trip (a quick 20 minutes), we arrived on Cres. From the Porosina ferry terminal near the island's north end, we cycled another 27 km, climbing 525 meters to reach the town of Cres—starting with a steady, warm 10 km uphill stretch! Highlights of the day included the viewpoint at the top of the climb between Labin and the ferry, which offered our first glimpse of Cres, and the saddle viewpoint on Cres, providing stunning vistas of the Adriatic on both sides of the island. After another climb from the saddle, the downhill views into Cres were simply breathtaking. Upon arrival, we checked into the beautiful resort Hotel Kimen, where many of us enjoyed our first refreshing swim in the Adriatic's crystal-clear waters.



04.06. part 1 Labin - Brestova ferry

28.5 km  
DISTANCE

346 m  
ELEVATION GAIN

6.7 %  
MAX GRADE



04.06. part 2 Porosina ferry - Cres hotel

27.2 km  
DISTANCE

547 m  
ELEVATION GAIN

9.2 %  
MAX GRADE



Today was our first breakout to the islands along the fantastic cliffs of the Eastern coastline of the peninsula of Istria and to the unspoiled scenery of Cres Island, the 2nd largest island in Croatia. Everywhere there are wild herbs that give the local food its distinctive taste, wildflowers and thousands of very old olive trees.)





## June 5 - Day off in Cres - Lincoln

Under sunny skies, a gentle breeze, and warm temperatures, we embraced a leisurely day. We spent time exploring the **maze of alleys and shops** in the old town, basking in the sunshine, napping, swimming in the sea, and walking along the water's edge. Some took their bikes to explore areas further afield, while others hiked into the surrounding hills.

The day concluded with a delicious dinner at one of the local seafood restaurants, where we watched locals play *boćanje* and danced under the moonlight in the village square.



Cres is a fortified town that was inhabited in prehistoric times.



## June 6 - Joan

We departed the seaside town of **Cres** after a two-night stay at Hotel Kimen. Our day began at 8:20 AM with a warming 10 km, 8% grade climb to the summit. The descent from the summit was a thrilling 9% grade—fast, fabulous, and offering magnificent coastline views. We arrived in good time for our 25-minute **Merag ferry ride** across the Adriatic to Krk Island, then caught a second ferry to **Rab**. The Rab ferry journey lasted about 1.5 hours. Some of the group chose to enjoy the sun, breeze, and landscapes from the exposed upper deck, while others relaxed in the climate-controlled lounge.

Arriving in **Lopar**, we stopped for lunch at "Feral" restaurant, a recommendation from Alen, our tour guide. The specialty was calamari, fresh garden salad, and a choice of chocolate or apricot pancake – Alen certainly knows all the local favorites! Thankfully, our afternoon cycle was only 13.9 km, as the midday heat was intense. We arrived at the lovely Historic Valamar Hotel. The hotel pool, a refreshing 26 degrees, offered a welcome respite. A welcome reception began at 6:45 PM, followed by dinner. Rab town boasts four towers, reflecting 14th-15th century Venetian architectural influences (Rab is an Italian name). Alen shared much fascinating history. After a full buffet dinner, guests were invited to a DJ disco party, others enjoyed an evening stroll through the old town, taking in the sights, and some retired early to be well-rested for another day of cycling this beautiful country.

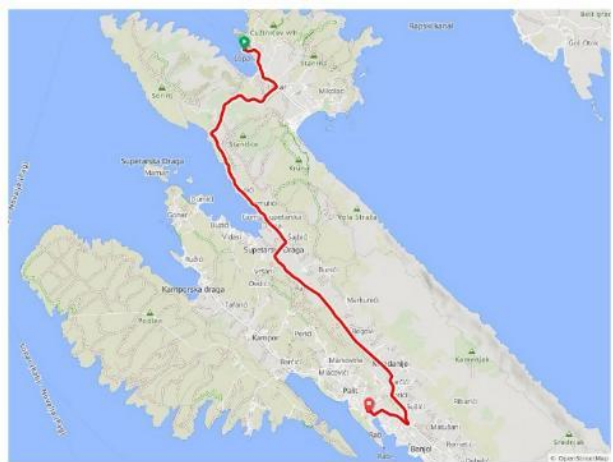


06.06. part 1 Cres - Merag ferry

**14.7 km**  
DISTANCE

**376 m**  
ELEVATION GAIN

**10.1 %**  
MAX GRADE



06.06. part 2 Lopar- Rab Valamar Collection hotel

**14.0 km**  
DISTANCE

**177 m**  
ELEVATION GAIN

**5.9 %**  
MAX GRADE



The beautiful island of Rab is a scenic island in Kvarner Bay. It is made of contrasts between sharp rock cliffs on the east coast and gentle pebbly beaches covered with macchia and forests of Mediterranean oak on the opposite coast.

To reach Rab, we not only cycled but spent some relaxing time on 2 different ferry boats. One ferry from the island of Cres to the island of Krk and then after a break another ferry to the island of Rab where we enjoyed a nice lunch and cycled to our hotel.

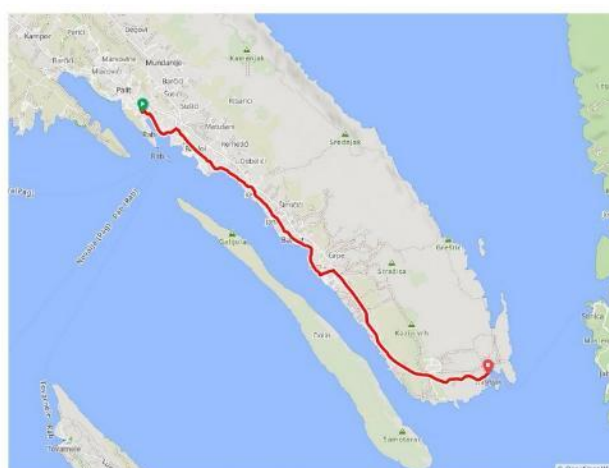




## June 7 - Craig

After a lovely buffet breakfast at our Valamar hotel, we enjoyed a casual 11 km ride along the coastline and over a couple of hills to the **Mišnjak ferry**. This region presents quite a contrast to Istria, being very dry with sparse vegetation.

The ferry dropped us off on the mainland at **Stinica**, where we began a 4 km climb. Beautiful views unfolded on our right as we rode the ridge. The rugged hills to the west can generate a cold easterly Bora wind, which creates extreme weather when it meets humid ocean air currents. A fun downhill brought us to the second ferry at **Prizna**, heading to **Pag Island**. For 31 km, we rode a hilly route, with old stone walls interlaced into the hardscrabble landscape. Our day concluded in the beautiful town of **Pag**, an island renowned for the best Croatian lamb. It was a solid day of riding, covering over 60 km and more than 1000m of climbing, all under a hot sun.

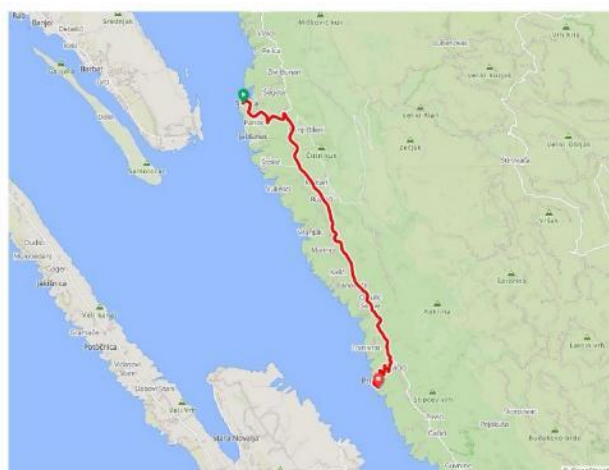


07.06. part 1 Rab - Mišnjak ferry

**11.9 km**  
DISTANCE

**154 m**  
ELEVATION GAIN

**6.9 %**  
MAX GRADE



07.06. part 2 Stinica ferry - Prizna ferry

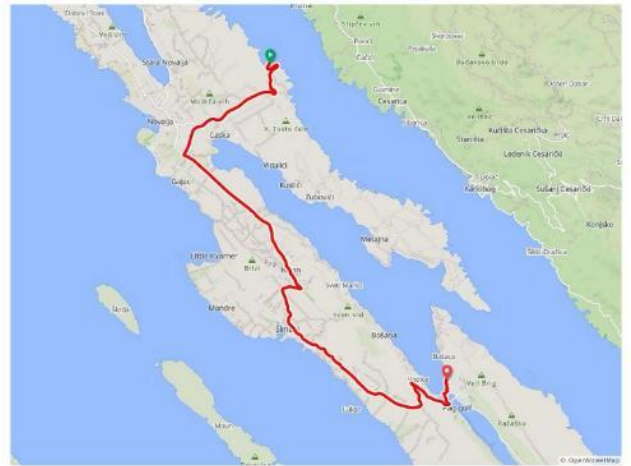
**19.7 km**  
DISTANCE

**395 m**  
ELEVATION GAIN

**9.0 %**  
MAX GRADE







07.06. part 3 Zigljen ferry - Pag

**32.0** km  
DISTANCE

**529** m  
ELEVATION GAIN

**7.8** %  
MAX GRADE



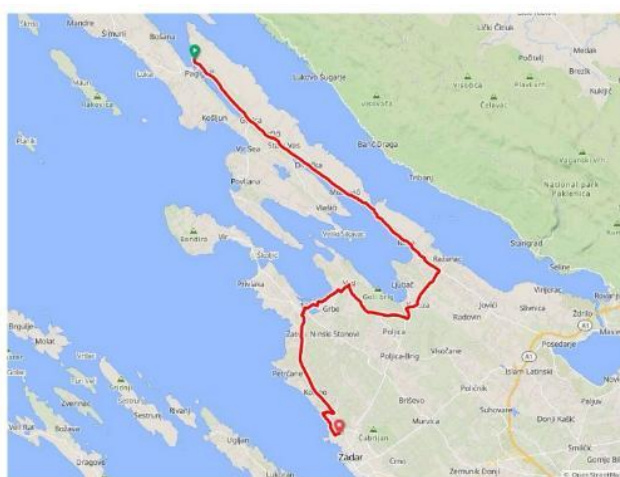
Pag is known for its lacework and sheep and the best Croatian lamb meat comes from Pag. The scenery is particularly moonlike in locations where the Northern Bora wind has blown away all the vegetation. The Dalmatian coast starts about here with whitewashed limestone villages and sapphire waters.

## June 8 - Rick - Our 6th Cycling Day

Today, our group cycled 65 km with 530 m of climbing from the town of **Pag** on Pag Island to **Zadar** on the Croatian mainland. This was a moderate cycling day in terms of effort, though the weather was quite hot, and we battled a stiff headwind for much of the day. We've been incredibly lucky so far with no flat tires, but one of the group did experience the first mechanical event of the tour: a broken chain. Fred, ever prepared, had the necessary chain tool and had himself back on the road with hardly a missed pedal stroke.

After crossing the bridge from the island to the mainland, we enjoyed a nice coffee stop with superb views of the **Adriatic Sea** and the rugged **Dinaric Alps of Dalmatia**. The lunch stop was later in the ride, in the historic town of **Nin**, an ancient Croatian royal town inhabited for 3000 years. We explored interesting Roman ruins and witnessed a special celebration at the church, built on the site of the first Croatian cathedral, dating from the 6th century.

We all arrived at the hotel in **Zadar** in time for refreshments, a swim, and relaxation by the pool. Dinner was served by the hotel on their veranda, under clear skies and warm summer evening temperatures.



08.06. Pag - Zadar

**64.4 km**  
DISTANCE

**567 m**  
ELEVATION GAIN

**8.9 %**  
MAX GRADE



On the way to Zadar is the village of Nin, an early Croatian royal town, that has been inhabited for 3000 years.





### June 9 - Zadar - Greg

Today was a group rest day. **Zadar**, as the oldest city in Croatia and the largest in the Northern Dalmatia region (population approximately 75,000), offers a wide spectrum of activities. The city boasts buildings dating back to the 8th century, with a history marked by turmoil and occupation from the Roman and Renaissance periods to the more recent war of 1991. Most of our group attended the morning **Zadar Old Town walking tour**, discovering its rich Roman and Venetian architecture, history, and culture. Our day off the bikes rewarded us with an extraordinary historical and cultural experience.



Zadar is one of the most famous towns of the Southern Adriatic region called Dalmatia. It has a beautiful old part of the town with an old network of narrow and charming city streets as well as Roman forum ruins and the pre-Romanesque Church of St. Donat dating back to the 9th century.



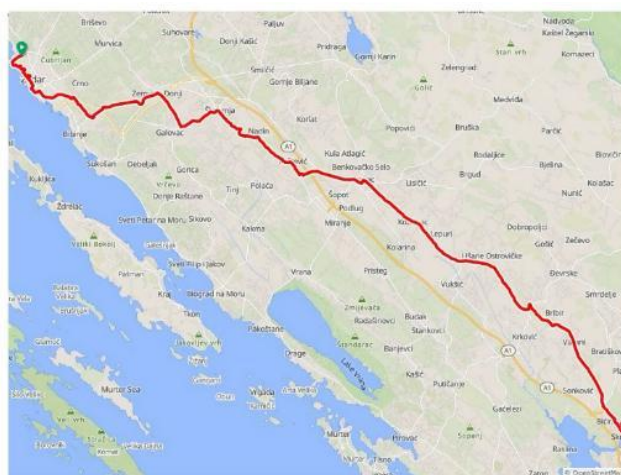
## June 10 - Sanborn

### Zadar to Skradin via Benkovac

A long, hot day, but not overly strenuous: 83 km with 744 m elevation gain. I left a bit early, enjoying a solitary start out of Zadar. The road was beautiful in the cool, uncrowded conditions: low hills to the left, water to the right, and barren hills beyond. Stone walls fenced in ponds of water. I stopped at a local cafe for a quick coffee.

Later, I rode with Greg for a while. During a mid-ride pause, he spotted a couple of turtles in the brush beside the road. At **Benkovac**, I split off for coffee with Irene, Steve, and Agnes while Greg continued. The coffeeshop was on a long pedestrian boulevard. We sat for a while, and Bruce joined us.

Afterward, well-refueled, we passed the rest of the group who had stopped for lunch at the local Plodine supermarket and were picnicking in a shady park. We passed a mural commemorating a young man lost in the war, and at the next water stop, a crowd of riders were plucking mulberries from a tall tree—purple-stained fingers all around! Bruce and I rode together for the long, gentle downhill into **Skradin**, finishing at the cafe opposite the hotel where others welcomed us. In the evening, after dinner on the main street, several of us walked up to the fortress ruin and watched the strawberry moon rise over the hill on the other side. Some great shots captured the illuminated church tower and the moon together. A truly great day.



10.06. Zadar - Skradin

**83.3 km**  
DISTANCE

**745 m**  
ELEVATION GAIN

**5.9 %**  
MAX GRADE



For the first time on the trip we cycled across the region where The Croatian War of Independence was fought from 1991 to 1995. Ruined houses and abandoned villages can still be seen. The final destination was Skradin, and entrance to the National Park of the Krka River



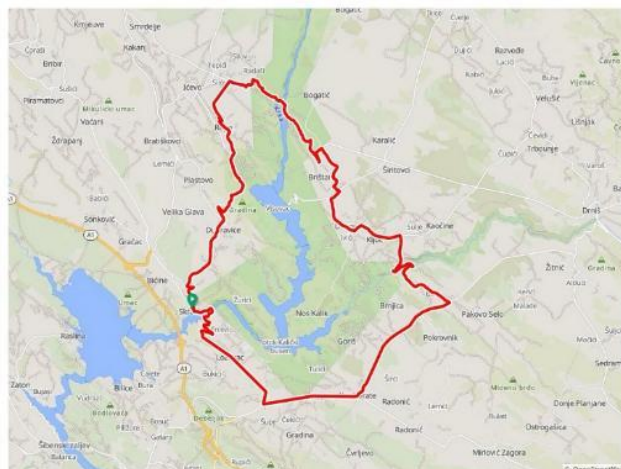


## June 11 - Marjorie

As today's ride was a loop circumnavigating **Krka National Park** from Skradin, some of us chose to take the day off. So, after a relaxing coffee and chat with Joan, Marg, and Marion, your correspondent took the 20-minute boat cruise up the Krka River to see the **Skradinski Buk waterfalls**—an 800-meter stretch of 17 tiers of falls that powered an early hydroelectric plant in 1895.

After walking the boardwalk loop through a lovely shaded forest, serenaded by the local frog population, we cruised back to Skradin, where we saw the first of the returning cyclists, Chris and Fred. Could they now be e-bike converts?

Highlights of the bike ride were the first 30 km in the relative cool of the morning and the beautiful park views. A highlight at the beach was the rogue swan and Greg's talent in luring it away from a fellow tourist's beach bag. All had another great day in Croatia.



11.06. Skradin Loop

**55.7 km**  
DISTANCE

**791 m**  
ELEVATION GAIN

**11.1 %**  
MAX GRADE



Skradin is an attractive tourist destination whose beauty is crowned by three of the most attractive sites in the Krka National Park, Skradin Buk Waterfalls, Roški Waterfall with its ancient mills and the small Franciscan island of Visovac with a votive sanctuary, rich library and a cultural and artistic treasury.





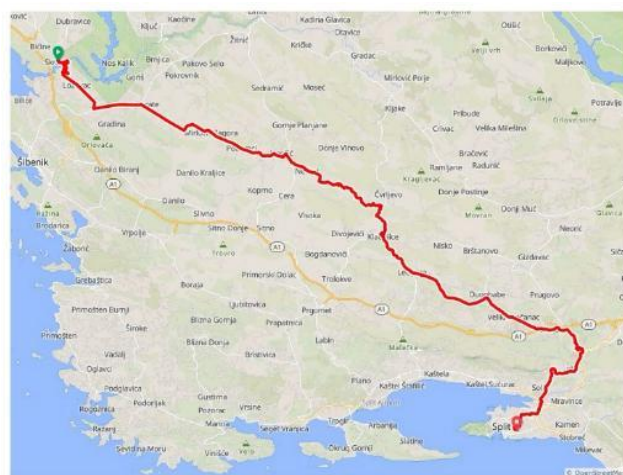


## June 12 - Skradin to Split - Corinne

Our cycling today led us along the quiet, hilly roads of the "Zagora," the **Dalmatian hinterland**. No tourists here, just rugged nature and small villages. Traffic was so light that some bus stops along the way were right on the road, delineated by yellow dotted lines.

Our group was all smiles in the heat and sun of the day, and in the little supermarket at lunchtime, Phil Collins' "Another Day in Paradise" fittingly played for us.

We ended our day in busy, beautiful **Split**, where, alongside thousands of visitors, we marveled at the centuries of history that shaped **Diocletian's Palace**, with the old town nestled within its walls. Some of us also enjoyed a refreshing dip in the superb hotel's pool overlooking the city.



12.06. Skradin - Split

**85.0 km**  
DISTANCE

**1,095 m**  
ELEVATION GAIN

**8.1 %**  
MAX GRADE



Cycled through a special region called "zagora" or "zagorje" which refers to an area "on the other side of a mountain or a hill". Throughout history, this term has been widely used to describe places physically detached from some other, economically or politically more prominent areas. We finished in the main town of Dalmatia, Split with its Roman Diocletian Palace. Under Diocletian, the Roman Emperor, a luxurious palace was built around 300 AD. Today it is one of Croatia's most visited monuments



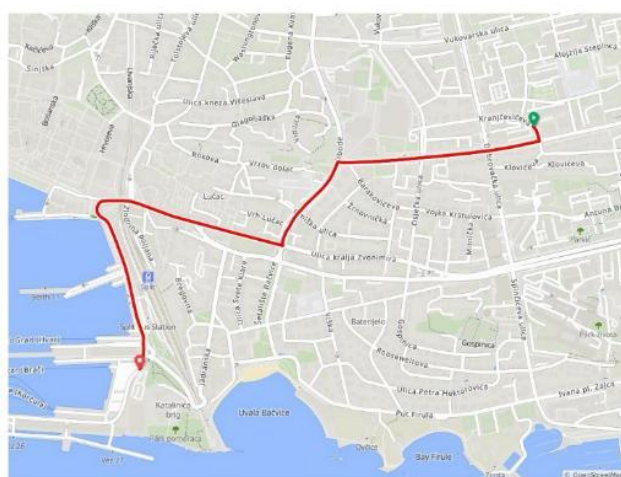
## June 13 - Split - Agnes

By chance, I'm writing this report on my birthday, and I was born on a Friday the 13th—which was today! We stayed in a very nice modern hotel about 1 km from the palace, featuring a rooftop infinity pool with a great view and a hot tub.

The morning began with another beautiful breakfast and a surprise! As soon as I arrived, everyone sang "Happy Birthday," and I received a very nice card, which was incredibly touching. Alen presented me with a beautiful cheesecake, which he thoughtfully packed up for our boat ride.

We had a short ride to the 10:30 AM ferry. We had about an hour to explore the nearby market, where fruits and some clothes were sold. A few ladies had a "shopping accident"! The market was very close to the palace, allowing us another look at the old castle. The ferry ride lasted about 3 hours to **Korčula Island**, specifically **Vela Luka**. It was another very hot day, so we were very happy with the air-conditioning on the boat. We enjoyed the delicious cake and coffee onboard.

Our hotel in Vela Luka was right on the shore, and the small town was lovely. Some people from the group walked up to a cave where they found the oldest skeleton in the Mediterranean. Four of us took a 5-minute water taxi to the nearest swimming shore. It was absolutely stunning, with lush vegetation, secluded coves, and great views of the islands. The sea was very refreshing on such a hot day. We arrived back at the hotel for happy hour and the daily briefing. Dinner was lovely, as it has been every day. After a nice chat and walk, we called for an early night to be well-rested for tomorrow's very hilly ride.



13.06. Split hotel - Split ferry

2.0 km  
DISTANCE

2m  
ELEVATION GAIN

0.6 %  
MAX GRADE



The morning had some free time in Split prior to a 3 hour ferry crossing to the island of Korcula. Free afternoon in Vela Luka





## June 14 - Ann

This morning we awoke prepared for what Alen warned us would be a "serious" day of cycling from **Vela Luka** to the picturesque town of **Korčula** and onwards to **Orebić**. Some folks headed out by 8 AM to beat the heat.

We took a shady uphill road out of town, venturing through the length of Korčula Island. The fields of trees and wildflowers smelled wonderful. We passed through some charming villages, including **Blato**, **Smokvica**, **Cara**, and **Pupnat**, before pulling into Korčula. We all endured (perhaps "enjoyed" isn't quite the right word!) a climb of more than 1,000 meters through vineyards and farms. Not one rider needed a lift! We then descended to a lovely village in a valley. One amazing descent was a "Goat Trail" of a curvy road down to the Fortuna Bistro coffee shop, which some deserving riders certainly enjoyed. We had to pay close attention to the narrow road with approaching cars. Just before reaching Korčula, Carl, the "King of the Flats," needed a quick tire change, and tire experts Rick and Peter were at the rescue.

Many enjoyed lunch and sightseeing in Korčula before boarding the ferry to **Orebić**. There, many swam in the white-capped waters, bouncing in the waves. Some instead gathered for beer at the beach and watched the swimmers and windsurfers.

For those who still had energy, there was a stationary bike at the Hotel Crystal (though I don't think it was used!).



14.06. part 1 Vela Luka - Korčula - Domince ferry

**55.2** km  
DISTANCE

**917** m  
ELEVATION GAIN

**10.7** %  
MAX GRADE



Korčula is an island with a rich cultural history that started with Greek settlements in the 6th century BC. There are breathtaking coastal vineyards, olive groves, and small villages and hamlets. The town of Korčula, a UNESCO site, is where Marco Polo left for his world-famous journey to China.







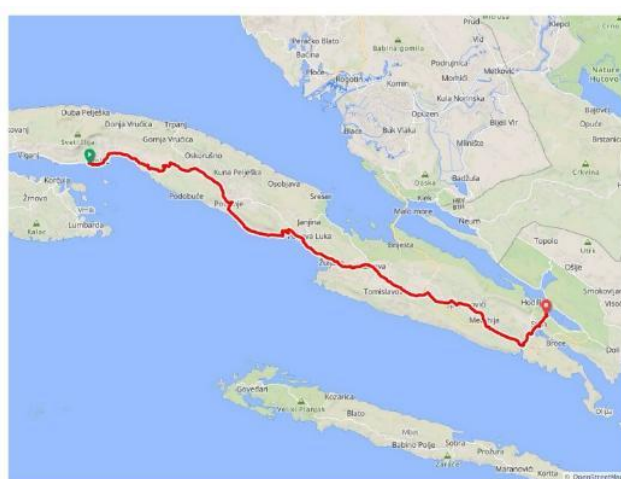
## June 15 - Bruce

Wow, our last riding day of a wonderful trip. As the old rockers, Blood, Sweat and Tears, shout out, "What goes up must come down, Spinning wheels got to go 'round." This is Croatia, and it's all about the hills!

We left our hotel in **Orebić** and enjoyed a nice seaside route with a refreshing breeze. Soon, the climb began, and the wind changed from refreshing to challenging, but the vistas along the coastline were stunning: terraced vineyards and the multi-colored Adriatic. After reaching the highpoint, we descended into a nice valley, which once again rewarded us with views of small towns and church steeples, which are never far away. We rode through a delightful, one-lane paved tunnel with good visibility. The view at the end of the tunnel was jaw-dropping: terraced fields leading down to the Adriatic. The descent was magical, but of course, this was followed by another climb. However, the next downhill ended at a wonderful seaside village, complete with shaded cafes. Leaving **Trstenik** was uphill, but at the top was our support van with lunch. Niko found a spot with a great view and shade. More undulating countryside with villages, and then the descent into **Ston**. Interestingly, vineyards were the dominant crop today, often on very steep terraced slopes, with not too many olive groves.

The walls of Ston, built in the 14th and 15th centuries, stretch 7 km, traversing steep ground. This fortification is the longest preserved defense wall in Europe.

The evening was marked by a farewell dinner. Excellent seafood and big thanks to Alen and Niko. Also, a huge thank you to Marg for her work—a very successful trip!



15.06. Orebić - Mali Ston

**59.9 km**  
DISTANCE

**966 m**  
ELEVATION GAIN

**10.8 %**  
MAX GRADE



The last cycling day. We climb along some of the world's steepest vineyards, which produce some good wines such as DINGAC which are 'born' here. We'll gaze down on the picturesque village of Trstenik and climb out of it along the famous Grgic Winery. Mr. Grgic also built a 400 acre winery in the Napa Valley. After a few last climbs of the tour we will enjoy a late lunch. We finish in Mali Ston, a small place with famous Ston Walls – 3.4 mile long wall in the shape of an irregular pentangle that was completed in the 15th century. These walls were meant to protect the precious salt that contributed to Dubrovnik's wealth. Mali Ston is also famous for oysters.





## June 16 - Mali Ston to Dubrovnik - Chris

The pedaling has stopped, but the adventure continues! Our exhilarating biking journey concluded this morning with a delightful seaside breakfast. We savored handmade cappuccinos, the perfect complement to the serene coastal views, as we bid a warm farewell to our leaders, Alen and Niko. Leaving the tranquil beauty of **Mali Ston** behind, we boarded a comfortable bus, eager for our final destination: the ancient and awe-inspiring city of **Dubrovnik**.

Upon arrival at our hotel in Dubrovnik, the group, buzzing with anticipation, immediately dispersed to explore. Some were drawn to the calming rhythm of the waves, opting for a leisurely stroll along the picturesque Dubrovnik shoreline, soaking in the sun and sea air. Others, eager to delve into history, embarked on a captivating walking tour of the **Old City**, their footsteps echoing through narrow, cobbled streets and past magnificent historical buildings. To truly experience Dubrovnik's iconic grandeur without the bustling crowds, we made plans to walk the magnificent city walls and explore its insightful museums early the next morning. As evening descended, many enjoyed a final Mediterranean dinner, sharing stories from the day. Many of us prepared for our departures home the following day, bringing our fabulous trip to a bittersweet close.

