

SOUTHERN SEA VENTURES

CROATIA HIGHLIGHTS

NINE DAY TRIP: SIX DAYS KAYAKING, ONE DAY WALKING

Croatia is home to one of Europe's largest archipelagoes with over 1,200 islands. Curving around Bosnia, the coastline stretches along the Adriatic from Slovenia in the north to Montenegro and Albania in the south.

Our trip along this section of the Dalmatian coast offers a smorgasbord of dramatic scenery and historical and cultural experiences. We'll explore ruins and forts from Illyrian and Roman times, small fishing villages and two national parks.

Designed for people with some paddling experience, we paddle from Sukošan, near Zadar, through the Kornati Islands National Park to Skradin. This is a voyage of exploration **and may be subject to some deviations in the itinerary depending on the weather conditions we encounter.**

Overnight campsites include remote beaches, private islands and the occasional public campground. The clear warm waters of the Adriatic combined with the spectacular landscape of Northern Croatia makes this an adventure not to be missed!

A QUICK ITINERARY

Day 1	Arrive Zadar. Overnight Zadar hotel.	D
Day 2	Kayak Sukošan to Žut	BLD
Days 3-4	Kayak through Kornati National Park.	BLD
Days 5-6	Paddle from Lavsa to Murter and Prvich.	BLD
Day 7	Kayak Prvich to Skradin. Overnight hotel in Skradin.	BLD
Day 8	Hiking in Krka National Park. Overnight in Skradin.	BLD
Day 9	Trip concludes with a transfer to Zadar.	B

MEETING PLACE AND TIME

We meet at the Mediteran Hotel in Zadar where we spend our first night. Room check in is available from 2pm. The trip meeting with your guide will be held at the hotel at 7pm, followed by a welcome dinner.

HOW TO GET THERE

Several airlines have flights to Zadar from European cities, including Ryanair from London (Stansted) and Lufthansa from Munich. Croatia Airlines flies from Zagreb to Zadar two to three times per day. There are several bus companies in Croatia with extensive networks around the country and a very good coastal ferry service. Your travel agent and/or internet research can provide timetables and costs.

PADDLING EXPERIENCE

This trip is designed for people with some previous paddling experience. You do not have to be an expert or know how to roll. However, you should have practiced a wet exit and assisted re-entry before the trip. This can easily be practiced in waist deep warm water with a friend's help or under tuition. We are always happy to discuss your experience, and can often suggest how beginner paddlers might gain the necessary experience at home to prepare for the trip. We require all participants to complete and return our "Experience Form" shortly after booking. It is important to recognize that the weather **and wind** will influence greatly what we can and can't do.

We predominantly use single kayaks on this trip, but some doubles are available. The degree of difficulty of the trip will depend on the weather we encounter. The wind in the Adriatic can vary from gentle puffs to a strong wind so you should be used to paddling in a variety of conditions. We

paddle between three to six hours per day. It is important to realise that the group will kayak at the speed of the slowest members. All participants should feel confident in swimming.

The kayaks we use are stable, easy to paddle and control. They are designed as expedition boats but it is important to keep gear to a minimum as we carry on board all our food and equipment. Our trip leaders are highly experienced sea kayakers and professional guides. On Day 2 you will be given a thorough briefing on your equipment and trip safety with time to adjust your individual boats. ****Note – if you choose to use a double kayak then you will have less storage space and should take that into consideration when packing. Please refer to our equipment list for details on what to pack.**

As with most activities, the fitter you are, the more you will enjoy the paddling. We highly recommended participants become involved in regular exercise (paddling, walking, jogging, cycling, aerobics or swimming) some months prior to the trip. We generally limit our group to a maximum of 10 clients, plus the two guides.

PROPOSED ITINERARY

The following itinerary should be seen as an approximate guide only. Our aim is to have a genuine Croatian adventure and a great time rather than being governed by a rigid schedule. Our program may change over the nine days to take advantage of any opportunities that may arise, local weather conditions and preferences of the group. **Please note that weather conditions, transport breakdowns and other factors can cause alterations and delays to our itinerary.**

Day 1 – Arrive Zadar. Make your way to the Hotel Mediteran. A taxi from the airport to the hotel takes about 15 minutes and will cost approximately 200 kuna or 27 euro. Hotel room check in is from 2pm. If you arrive early, the hotel reception will gladly mind your bags until your room is ready. The trip briefing is held with your guide at the hotel at 7pm, followed by a welcome dinner. During the briefing, your guide will hand out dry-bags for you to use during the kayak trip. Bag size is approximately 20 litres. Any excess luggage that you do not wish to take kayaking will be stored and transferred from Zadar to Skradin where we finish the trip.
D...Overnight at the Mediteran Hotel, Zadar.

Day 2 – After breakfast, we transfer to Sukošan (20 minute drive) and begin paddling. We kayak down Zadar Canal past the Pašman – Ugljan bridge and out to the island of Sit. After lunch we cruise through a chain of islands to reach our first camp at Žut. This is the upper Kornati area and from here the scenery changes to stunning rock structures contrasting with the deep blue of the Adriatic Sea.
BLD...Camping.

Day 3 – One of our longer paddling days, (approximately 23 km), so it's an early start this morning! We paddle from the island of Žut to Levrnaka, passing 140m high cliffs. We hope to visit saltwater Mir Lake in Telascica National Park before passing the lighthouse island of Sestrice and Obručan. After Dead Man Island we reach Levrnaka and its unique sandy beach. We are now in the middle of the Kornati islands.
BLD...Camping.

Day 4 – We continue paddling south to the magical island of Mana where we can see the remains of an ancient fort. The island top is crowned with cliffs and provides a stunning backdrop to paddle alongside. We take a swimming break and stretch our legs before carrying on to Piškera for lunch. Here we see the remains of a 16th century fishing community and Roman foundations. We continue on to Lavsa and our evening camp.
BLD...Camping.

Day 5 – We transfer by boat from Lavsa to Murter and then paddle through the Murter Channel, stopping for regular swims en route to Kosirina Bay and our campsite. We will have an opportunity for a hot shower and clothes washing tonight.

BLD...Camping.

Day 6 – Continuing south we paddle to the mainland and the town of Tribuni. After a short tour of the town, we cross to the island of Prvich with its scenic village. We enjoy fresh local cuisine in a restaurant tonight.

BLD...Camping.

Day 7 – An early start for our longest and last paddling day, kayaking from Prvich to Skradin. We will paddle to the historic town of Sibenik, up the channel of St Ante and past the 15th century fortifications of St Nikola. We'll stop for lunch in the old city and then carry on past the Sibenik bridge and Skradin bridge to finish at Skradin. After our 25 km paddle, we'll pack up our kayaks and then relax in hotel accommodation with a restaurant meal.

BLD... Hotel.

Day 8 – After breakfast, we visit Krka National Park and the spectacular waterfalls of Skradinski Buk. The travertine barriers form hundreds of cascades and waterfalls, where a cooling swim is welcome after our hike.

BLD...Overnight in our Skradin Hotel.

Day 9 – After breakfast there is a group transfer to Zadar airport. Trip concludes.

B.

CLIMATE

Summers in Croatia are hot and dry, especially in July and August. The months of May and September are a little cooler – still shorts and T-shirt weather at most times during the day, evenings a little cooler and with the possibility of occasional showers. The weather is generally settled but wind can be a factor.

ACCOMMODATION AND CAMPING

Zadar and Skradin: We will have simple twin-share bed and breakfast hotel accommodation. Our office can book pre and post trip nights at the Hotel Mediteran in Zadar if required.

Camping: We supply two-person tents, foam mats and communal camping equipment. You can either bring your own sleeping bag or rent one. If bringing your own sleeping bag, ensure it is compact to conserve space in the kayaks. Rental charge for a sleeping bag is 20 euros. Please note, the ground is often rocky, sharp and very hard so you should take that into consideration. We recommend bringing your own Thermarest. Some public campgrounds can be basic, offering only cold-water showers.

TRIP ORGANISATION

We have built in occasional access to electricity, laundry and intermittent van and boat support to bring in fresh food during our kayak trip.

Camping Segment

Our paddling days will start early to make the most of each day. It's a good idea to pack your dry-bag before breakfast, prepare your personal items for the day and take down your tent so that loading for departure can be organised.

We mix up our campsites on wild beaches and intersperse this with campgrounds to provide access to more facilities. On arrival in camp you will be expected to unload your own boats, and you and

your partner will be responsible for your own tent or sleeping site. The guides will also appreciate your assistance in other camp duties. We find that people joining our trips alone soon make friends.

Food

Our guides usually prepare meals in camp and your help is welcome. At some campsites we are able to eat local Croatian food at a nearby restaurant. Restaurant meals throughout the trip will be simple and provide variety and a taste of local cuisine.

We are happy to cater for vegetarians and other special dietary needs, please let us know at the time of booking any dietary requirements.

EXPEDITION STAFF

There will be two experienced kayak guides. Should you have any questions during the trip, feel free to ask your guides.

CONSERVATION

It has always been our motto that "we take only photographs and leave only footprints". We are keenly aware of the ecology of the areas we visit and try to limit our impact on them. We ask that each person take out everything they bring in including sweet wrappers, batteries, etc.

PHOTOGRAPHY

We are paddling mainly in a salt-water environment and the delicate electronics in digital or film cameras can be damaged. You might consider a waterproof camera or a small plastic waterproof case or dry-bag with a supply of Silicon Packs. Ensure you have sufficient memory storage and batteries for a digital camera, as there is little opportunity to purchase batteries or access electricity during our kayak trip. If you are using a film camera it is wise to keep lenses to a minimum. One variable lens will reduce your load and the amount of your equipment that can be damaged. We recommend all film be purchased and processed in your home country. If you are buying a new camera, consider a waterproof one and get it well before departure so you can practice with it. It is inconvenient to find fault with the camera during a trip.

MONEY MATTERS

Your tour cost includes:

- Bed and breakfast hotel accommodation in Zadar on a twin share basis for the first night of the trip.
- Bed and breakfast hotel accommodation in Skradin on a twin share basis for the last two nights of the trip.
- Expedition kayaks, paddles, life jackets and safety equipment.
- Two person tents and foam mats.
- 20 litre watertight dry-bags for your personal gear while kayaking.
- Professional guides.
- All meals from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 9.
- Entrance fees to National Parks.

Your tour cost does not include:

- Any flights.
- Airport to hotel transfers.
- Entry fees into historic sites.
- Items of a personal nature such as postage and laundry.
- Alcoholic beverages.
- Some bottled water throughout the trip.
- Airport taxes.
- Travel insurance.



- Tips.
- Sleeping bags (these can be hired at an extra charge).
- Thermarests are not provided but are recommended to bring.

MONEY TO BRING WITH YOU

There are ATM machines in the main centres and this is the most efficient way to obtain Croatian kuna. The kuna is tied to the euro but is not much value outside Croatia so it is better to exchange small amounts at a time. Credit cards are accepted in larger stores or hotels. Traveller's cheques and cash can be changed at banks in the larger towns and cities but the process can be time consuming. US dollars and euros are far easier to exchange than Australian dollars within Croatia, but if you are traveling to Europe before or after it is better to have euros.

During the trip you will need money for alcohol, bottled water and soft drinks, entry fees to a few historical sites and any shopping you intend to do.

TIPPING

We recommend you put aside a little money for general tips, i.e. restaurants, porters.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

It is necessary to take out a personal insurance policy to cover yourself against sickness, accident, loss of baggage, trip cancellation due to inclement weather or other reasons and in the unlikely event that you need emergency evacuation by plane or helicopter due to illness or accident. Ensure you have read the policy thoroughly and are familiar with the claim process in case it becomes necessary to make an emergency claim.

We strongly recommend you take out insurance at the time of booking. Please supply us with the policy details (insurance company name and contact details and policy number) before the trip.

MEDICAL MATTERS

All participants are required to provide us with a medical questionnaire filled out completely and accurately. Please check with your doctor or medical centre whether you require any vaccinations or boosters. An expedition first aid kit is carried on the trip. We strongly recommend that you bring with you any required medicines and a small first aid kit for your own personal use. Due to the remoteness of the trip it is advisable to have a dental checkup before departure.

PASSPORT

Make sure that you have a signed passport and that its validity will extend to six months after the date of your return. If you are not an Australian citizen and are returning to Australia after your trip, make certain that you have the necessary re-entry permit from the Department of Immigration.

VISAS

For most visitors visas are not required for stays in Croatia of less than 90 days. Your passport may be checked at hotels as all tourists are registered.

WATER

Bottled water is readily available in towns and preferable to tap water that, although chlorinated, is not as safe. Water for the kayaking will be provided throughout the trip but you will have opportunities to buy extra if you wish. We recommend about three litres per day per person and will be able to restock with water every two to three days.

EXCESS LUGGAGE

Luggage that you do not take kayaking can be stored and transferred from the Zadar hotel to the Skradin hotel.

SECURITY

Before leaving home, photocopy your passport, airline/e ticket and make a note of your credit card and ATM card numbers in case you lose or misplace them. You should carry your passport on the kayak trip but could leave airline/e tickets with left luggage at the hotel in Zadar. Theft is a consideration in Croatia (like at home) so it is always a good idea not to carry large amounts of cash with you and always be aware of what you are carrying, especially personal valuables like cameras, jewellery and watches. Do not display valuable items or leave them lying around in such a way that might tempt a thief. It is a good idea to use a money belt or neck wallet.

CLOTHING & EQUIPMENT

Carefully check through all essential items. The dress code overall in Croatia is modest, but it is more relaxed on the Adriatic coast.

Essential Items

The following checklist is a guideline for your trip. Contact us if you have any questions.

- Lightweight waterproof rain jacket.
- Two pairs of shorts and swimming gear.
- One pair of sturdy sand shoes or running shoes or preferably a lightweight hiking boot.
- Lightweight socks.
- One pair of sport sandals (e.g. Teva or similar) or paddle booties.
- One pair of lightweight, quick drying, full length trousers.
- Lightweight long-sleeved shirt is recommended in camp for protection from insects.
- Lightweight woolen jumper or fleece jacket.
- One long sleeved thermal or polyester top is recommended while paddling for sun protection or warmth in rainy conditions. Lycra rash vest is also suitable.
- Wide-brimmed hat for protection from the sun is essential. Sun visors are inadequate. A hat with a stiff brim that will hold rigidity in a breeze, and a chinstrap to keep on in the wind. A scarf made from a light material such as silk, to protect your neck, is useful for sun protection.
- Small towel (a chamois towel is ideal).
- Minimal personal toiletries (biodegradable salt water soap may be handy).
- Good waterproof sun cream and lip balm, insect repellent (recommend RID).
- Sunglasses with a cord or string for attaching them to prevent loss.
- **Lightweight and compact sleeping bag and inner sheet – sleeping bag can be hired for 20 euros if required. Be sure to let us know if you require a sleeping bag.**
- Small torch and batteries
- A small daypack, bum bag or dry bag is good for holding things like sunscreen, glasses, etc. both for paddling and day walks.
- A small drybag is also useful for keeping a camera and valuables handy while paddling.
- A wetsuit vest is useful for snorkeling.
- 1 or 2, one litre water bottles (the type used by cyclists are good and inexpensive).
- Lightweight cycling gloves can ease blistering if you have not paddled recently.
- Small blowup pillow or pillowcase, this takes up little room and easily stuffed.
- Snorkeling gear (mask and snorkel only to save space or just swimming goggles).

Optional Items

- Power points require a plug with two round pins.
- Cards/games, book or magazine.
- Lightweight clothesline.
- Binoculars.
- Camera –bring sufficient film, batteries, and storage cards for digital cameras.
- **Thermarest (highly recommended).**

END OF THE TRIP

The trip finishes in Skradin after breakfast on Day 9. We can offer a group transfer to Zadar airport if catching a flight that day.

PRE OR POST TRIP ADVENTURE OPTIONS

We can organise a day trip to paddle the beautiful Zrmanja River using sit on top kayaks or an option to explore the Modrich Caves. Please contact our office for more details and costs.

It's worth considering extending your time in Croatia as there is a huge range of fascinating places to visit. Please contact our office for recommendations.

DELAYS OR PROBLEMS

In case of last minute delays or problems, contact Southern Sea Ventures in Australia on +61 2 8901 3287. Your guide's contact number will be noted on your final itinerary.

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