

Hiking the Julian Alps

Ljubljana, Slovenia

September 14 - 23, 2008 (Sunday-Tuesday)

Slovenia's dramatic mountain landscape is a hiker's paradise. Known for magnificent snowcapped peaks, deep gorges, and impressive limestone towers, the Julian Alps are less trammled but no less beautiful than other European Alps. Tucked between Italy, Austria, Hungary, and Croatia, Slovenia is also known for traditional alpine villages, complete with gothic castles, the amazing cave system that occurs in the karst limestone area, and a culture and cuisine that is fascinating. Long hidden behind the iron curtain and then one of the first provinces of the former Yugoslavia to declare independence, Slovenia is only now gaining the world's attention. The combination of a well-developed tourist infrastructure and unspoiled charm make this the perfect time to hike in the Julian Alps.

Most international air arrivals are early afternoon so we will plan to meet at the Ljubljana airport on September 14 and spend our first afternoon exploring the medieval charm of the old part of the city. The next day we are off to Slovenia's alpine region, the Julian Alps, with a first stop at the picturesque lake of Bled. Bled is known for the medieval church situated on a tiny island in the middle of the lake and for traditional Bled cream cakes, a culinary must! That afternoon we climb 1,120 feet to the Lipanca mountain hut where we'll experience the shepherds' traditional way of life, enjoying home-made yoghurt and cheese. The next morning we'll climb 6,610-foot Debela Peak and then descend to Bohinj, our base for the next three nights. Bohinj, in the center of the Julian Alps, is the perfect location for enjoying a free day, as there are countless activities available, including canyoneering, hiking, biking, and sampling the local wine. Our final day in the area is spent hiking to the Seven Triglav Lakes area, a land of turquoise lakes and limestone peaks. A strenuous hike, the unsurpassed beauty of the area makes the climb well worth it.

Our next two nights are in Bovec, the center of the Soca Valley. Hiking here introduces us to the exquisite alpine area so vividly described in Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*. Hiking beneath towering limestone peaks along an old Italian route reinforces just how close to Italy we are at this point. The scenery abruptly changes as we leave Bovec for the hilly wine-growing area of Goriska Brda and then the world-renowned Skoican cave system. After our cave tour, we return for a final night in Ljubljana before departing the next morning for home or our next adventure.

This trip is designed for women in good physical condition who want to learn about the history and culture of Slovenia, and who enjoy hiking in alpine environments. While not all our hikes are long, there will be several challenging days involving significant elevation gain and loss. Previous hiking experience, while not absolutely required, is a good idea.

We will be staying at comfortable tourist-class hotels that are classified three stars by the Slovenian classification system for seven nights. These hotels offer twin rooms with private facilities. We will also spend one night in a traditional mountain hut where there are no private rooms and one night in a guesthouse.

The trip fee is \$2825, with an early bird discount of \$100 for registration by January 26. The fee includes a Slovenian English-speaking woman guide, an Adventures in Good Company guide, accommodations as described in the itinerary, all meals from dinner on September 14 to breakfast on September 23 with the exception of three dinners and a lunch, all transport within Slovenia by private bus, entrance fees to sites that are included in the itinerary, and tips for the bus driver and restaurant staff. The trip fee doesn't include your airline ticket, insurance, drinks, or guide gratuities.

To reserve a place on this trip, please send your \$400 deposit to the Adventures in Good Company office, register on our web site, or call to register by phone. Four months before the trip we will send you pre-trip information, including a packing list. Final details and the names of other participants will be sent out several weeks in advance for pre-trip networking. If you have any questions, please call or e-mail us- we'd love to discuss whether this is the right trip for you.

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