



ADVENTURES
IN GOOD COMPANY



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE VIA DINARICA

JUNE 23 - JULY 5, 2019

TRIP SUMMARY

HIGHLIGHTS

- Hiking the highlights of Via Dinarica in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro, still one of the least visited areas in Europe
- Seeing spectacular limestone peaks, beautiful Adriatic coast, glacier lakes, amazing views, colorful wildflowers, medieval villages, and a gracious culture and people
- Rafting down the spectacular Tara River
- Hiking to the highest peaks in Bosnia and Montenegro
- Visiting Mostar and Sarajevo, two of the Balkans' most beautiful cities

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TRIP AT A GLANCE

Dates:	Jun 23 - Jul 5, 2019
Location:	Croatia, Montenegro, and Bosnia
Cost:	\$3,095.00
Activities:	Hiking
Arrive:	5PM on June 23 in the lobby of our hotel in Zagreb, Croatia
Depart:	Depart anytime on July 5 from the Sarajevo, BiH (SJJ) airport

TRIP OVERVIEW

Named Outside Magazine's Best New Trail, the Via Dinarica travels through the heart of the Western Balkans, along the Dinaric Alps. Crossing 8 different countries, it is still very much in development. Rather than waiting until it is completed, we're going to hike the highlights in three different countries: Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro. They are diverse, culturally rich and stunningly beautiful. Soaring limestone peaks and frigid clear glacial lakes are surrounded by alpine pastures, shepherds' huts, and remote villages. Equally fascinating and essential for understanding the region are its cities, where the old lives side by side with the modern. The Balkan peninsula has recently emerged as a travel destination and now is the time to visit, before mass tourism arrives. We journey across the Balkan peninsula, hiking, sightseeing, sampling the local cuisine, and learning just how much this area has changed since the wars of the '90s. Maximum group size: 14

[Download Trip Summary and Packing List](#)

RATING

This trip is designed for women in excellent physical condition who have prior hiking experience and are excited to experience an ambitious and new long trail. While the level of activity varies each day, you should be able to hike up to 8 hours on mountain trails with elevation gain and loss of 2500-3000 ft while carrying a daypack weighing about 15 pounds. Altitude is not a problem here. This trip is rated 5, which is our highest rating. There is minor scrambling and some exposure (trails with a drop off no one side); women with significant fear of heights should call the office before registering. This trip is rated 5, which is our highest rating and requires aerobic and endurance conditioning prior to beginning the trip. **Rating:** 1 2 3 4 [\[5\]](#) .

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- A Bosnian English-speaking mountain guide and an AGC guide
- 2 nights in mountain huts and 10 nights double occupancy in small hotels and pensions
- Meals from dinner on the first night to breakfast on last morning with the exception of one lunch. A glass of beer, wine, soda or water is included at dinner.
- All activities on the itinerary including city tours, wine and food tasting in Mostar
- All transportation during the trip in a private air-conditioned minibus
- Transport from the Zagreb, Croatia airport on June 23
- Tips for city guides and bus driver

What's not included: International airfare, airport transfer outside the group transfer time, guide gratuities, mandatory emergency evacuation insurance.

OUR ITINERARY

Below is the proposed itinerary for the trip. As is true on any adventure travel trip, plans for any specific day may be modified due to weather considerations, unforeseen circumstances, new opportunities, and group interests.

DAY 1

JUNE 23, SUNDAY



Arrive in Zagreb, Croatia. We will meet you at the airport at 3pm for transfer to our hotel for introductions and overview of our trip before our welcome dinner in Zagreb. If you arrive earlier, we can arrange a private transfer (in 2018 it was \$55 for 1 - 3 people). Zagreb is a beautiful and interesting city and well worth coming a day early if you have the time (not to mention that it will help with jetlag). Overnight [Hotel Central](#) (B&B) D

DAY 2

JUNE 24, MONDAY



Our adventure begins in Northern Velebit National Park. Velebit is the largest range of mountains in Croatia and we start our exploration on the Premuzic Trail. After our 3.5 hour transfer this morning to Zavizan Hut, we spend our first day hiking past wide mountain pastures, karst valleys, and towering peaks. Built in 1931 and still an engineering marvel, the Premuzic Trail traverses the main ridge of Velebit with almost non-stop views of the Adriatic below. The Alan Shepherd Houses - our home for the night, with stunning views of the sea and the islands - are situated at the foot of the Alancic peak. Luckily, we carried just our daypacks today and our luggage is waiting for us at the hut. After dinner, we may wander the nearby area, with visible remains of stone walls, old shepherd's summer huts, animal shelters, and rainwater cisterns. Hiking 10 miles, 6 - 7 hours, 1230' elev gain Overnight: Alan Shepherd Houses B, L, D

DAY 3

JUNE 25, TUESDAY



Today we continue following the Premuzic Trail and the challenging route of the Velebit Hiking Trail. We're rewarded by impressive views of the sea, with islands of Rab and Pag clearly visible. We hike to Satorina, the highest mountain in this area (5,324 ft) with vistas of surrounding mountains and the Adriatic Sea. Continuing below Satorina and Matijevec brijeg, there is a range of abandoned limestone karst fields, important source of livestock farming until the mid-20th century. Our hike is quite challenging today and we'll look forward to arriving at Kugina kuca. Our van will meet us for the 30 minute drive to Hostel Baske Ostarjje where our luggage and a delicious dinner await us. Hiking: 12.4 miles, 8-9 hours, 2720' elev gain Overnight: Hostel Baske Ostarjje B,L,D

DAY 4

JUNE 26, WEDNESDAY



Alas, this is our final day hiking in Croatia but it does not disappoint. After a short transfer we start a beautiful circular hike. We'll discover the geomorphological beauties of Dabarski Kukovi area, including an ascent of Visibaba peak (3810 feet), offering amazing panoramas to the Northern Dalmatia coast. The hike ends at Ravni Dabar,, where we meet our van and luggage for an hour and a half scenic coastal drive to Starigrad Paklenica, Croatia. This is a village and small port on the Adriatic coast where the mountains seemingly slip into the sea. It's a perfect place to take a dip in the sparkling blue waters and sample freshly caught fish, wine, olive oil, and bread. Often there is live music for a festive evening, if we still have energy. Hiking 10 miles, 5.5 - 6 hours, 1800' ft elev gain Overnight: [Hotel Vicko](#), Starigrad B, L, D

DAY 5

JUNE 27, THURSDAY



After the last 3 days of strenuous hiking, we'll enjoy a day of giving our legs a break. Our destination today is Mostar in Bosnia i Herzegovina (BiH), a 4 hour drive brings us to the middle of the former Yugoslavia and lies at the heart of the Dinaric Alps. We'll take a city walking tour of Mostar, famous for its beautiful historic Ottoman-style bridge, which was destroyed in the war. A significant portion of the city has been rebuilt, and this formerly war-torn city is once again a lively destination. For dinner tonight, we sample local Herzegovinan wine and food at "Okusi Hercegovinu," a farmers cooperative which was created by efforts of a group of enthusiasts from Herzegovina with the aim of preserving traditional agri-food and craft products, and promotion of the territory Herzegovina. The Association has enabled many farmers and artisans from the area of Herzegovina to improve their working environment and the standard of production. Overnight [Hotel Almira](#) B, L, D

DAY 6

JUNE 28, FRIDAY



Today we have a more leisurely morning, before traveling about 45 minutes to the Diva Grabovica Valley. This valley, home to several rare endemic trees and wildflowers, is one of the wildest and most beautiful areas on the Balkan peninsula. We'll hike on one of King Karadjordjevic's old hunting trails, climbing through the ancient forests of Cvrsnica Mountain to Zljeb. Starting from the valley of Diva Grabovica, it's a fairly steep climb at times, but truly stunning and refreshing. We'll climb 2.5 hours before reaching our destination, a perch overlooking the largest rock face on the Balkan Peninsula. The peaks of Cvrsnica tower around us in every direction from this point. This is a great way to spend the day: spectacular views with a refreshing hike fit for a king, but very much for queens too! After the hike we continue our journey to Sarajevo, a drive of about 1.5 hours, where we spend the next 2 nights. Hiking 6 miles, 5 - 6 hours, 2400' ft elev gain Overnight: [Pension Kandilj B, L, D](#)

DAY 7

JUNE 29, SATURDAY



This morning we have a guided tour of Sarajevo, one of the most historically interesting and varied cities in Europe. It is a place where the Western and Eastern Roman Empire split and the city is famous for its historic religious diversity, with practitioners of Islam, Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Judaism coexisting here for centuries. Sarajevo has been both an example of historical turbulence and the clash of civilizations, as well as a beacon of hope for peace and tolerance through multi-cultural integration. We have a free afternoon to continue exploring on our own or perhaps relax with a good book, before meeting up for dinner at a traditional Bosnian restaurant. Sarajevo Pension Kandilj B, D

DAY 8

JUNE 30, SUNDAY



Today we head to Sutjeska National Park, the oldest park and one of the two last remaining primeval forests in Europe. After dropping our luggage off at our hotel in Tjentiste, we'll drive for an hour to our hike near Donje Bare Lake. Sometimes referred to as the Yosemite of the Balkans, because of its stunning scenery and pristine habitats, the park is also famous as the location of the Battle of the Sutjeska in 1943 during World War II. Our hike is a loop, first to the tranquil lake of Donje Bare and then continuing through a beech forest and open mountainous terrain to the summit of Ugljesin Peak (6000 ft), for one of the best panoramic views of the Zelengora peaks and the rock-face wall of Volujak. We continue the stunning circuit back to Gornje Bare lake via the Tovarnica ridge with Bosnia's highest peak a constant companion on the horizon. Hiking 5.6 miles, 3 - 4 hours, 1280 ft elev gain. Overnight [Hotel Mladost](#) B, L, D

DAY 9

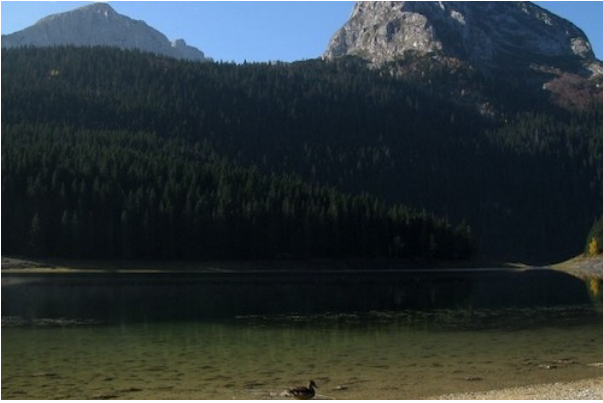
JULY 1, MONDAY



Today is the most challenging hike of the trip: Maglic Mountain (7,828'), the highest peak of Bosnia & Herzegovina! We'll keep a look out for wildlife on our four-hour ascent: bear, chamois (a goat-antelope species), boar, wolf, pine marten, and mink marten, wild cat, fox, and wild goats live in the park. Step by step we climb above the surrounding peaks on the well-maintained mountain trail with some steep cliffs, occasionally using chains for extra protection (not recommended if you suffer from vertigo.) Our reward at the summit is a break for lunch and breathtaking views over Montenegro and heart-shaped Trnovacko Lake. Dinner tonight is at a small local family restaurant where the most of the food is grown and served by the wife and cooked by the husband. Hiking 9 miles, 9 - 10 hours, 3700 ft elev gain. Overnight at Hotel Mladost B, L, D

DAY 10

JULY 2, TUESDAY



Today we travel to Zabljak, a high mountain village in Montenegro, and our home for the next two nights. After a 4 hour drive, we'll have time to drop our bags at the hotel and pick up some picnic food for lunch at the Crno Jezero (Black Lake) in nearby Durmitor National Park. Compared to yesterday, we'll have a mellow day hike around the Crno Jezero, dominated by the rocky peaks of Durmitor on one side and deep forest on the other. Despite the name, its waters take on a variety of colors throughout the day. Hiking 3.7 miles, 2 - 3 hours, 400 ft elev gain. Overnight Hotel Ski , Zabljak B, L, D

DAY 11

JULY 3, WEDNESDAY



This may be the trip's most beautiful hike! We head back to Durmitor National Park for a climb up to the ridge between Lucin Peak (7860') and Montenegro's highest peak, Bobotov Kuk (8,277'). You can choose to stay here or to continue up the challenging ridge to the top of Bobotov Kuk. Both have breathtaking views of the surrounding peaks and valleys - there are 48 peaks in the park - and on a clear day you can see all the way to the Adriatic Sea. After our climb we return to Zabljak. Hiking to the ridge 7.5 miles, 5-6 hours, 1920 ft elev gain or Bobotov Kuk 8.5 miles, 6 - 7 hours, 2500 ft elev gain. Overnight Hotel Ski B, L, D

DAY 12

JULY 4, THURSDAY



It's hard to leave Durmitor but it's time to head back to Sarajevo. On our way back we'll stop for a thrilling raft trip on the Tara River. We paddle through the deepest river canyon in Europe with 3,000 feet canyon walls rising above the stunning river wilderness area. After our adventure, we continue back to Sarajevo for a festive farewell dinner and celebration of our trip through the Balkans. (2 to 3 hours of rafting class II-IV rapids) Overnight Sarajevo Pension Kandilj B, L, D

DAY 13

JULY 5, FRIDAY

What a challenge this has been! We leave satisfied in knowing not only that we have challenged ourselves, but that, simply by hiking on the Via Dinarica at this early stage, we have contributed to its development and to the development of many areas that need and welcome tourism. But now it's time to bid farewell and to go home with new tales of adventure. Your guide will help you organize a taxi to the international airport (about 20 minutes, \$10) to fly home or to continue on your travels. B

ADDITIONAL TRIP INFORMATION

GETTING THERE

Plan to fly into Zagreb, Croatia (ZAG) June 23. There will be one group transfer at 3pm. If you prefer to arrive earlier, private transfers are available. In 2018 the cost was \$55.00 for up to 3 people.

Note: **The Departure airport is Sarajevo (SJJ).** You can leave anytime on July 5.

If you would like assistance with airline tickets we recommend contacting our travel agency, Exito Travel. Start by submitting the form you can find here: https://pay2.exitotravel.com/referral_form?affiliate_id=1090&client=1. If you prefer to call, the number is 800-655-4053; be sure to tell them you are traveling with Adventures in Good Company.

ACCOMMODATIONS

With the exception of our mountain section in Croatia, we will be staying in double occupancy rooms with ensuite bathrooms as detailed in the itinerary. During the mountain section in Croatia we will be staying in 2 mountain huts/hostels with shared accommodations and facilities.

Vegetarian and vegan options for this trip are available but limited; if you are concerned about having enough protein during your trip, please bring some plant-based protein sources such as nut butter, instant dried hummus, or high-protein energy bars. Some items, such as nuts, are widely available at grocery stores. If you cannot eat gluten, you will need to bring gluten-free products with you. Please call the office so we can help you plan.

WEATHER

The areas you will be visiting tend to have mild humid temperate climates. Average high temperatures in the cities for the month of June are in the 60s to 70s with lows in the 50s; temperatures will be cooler in the mountains. Light showers to thunderstorms are not uncommon in June. If you follow the packing list, you will have all the clothing you might need.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND TRIP CANCELLATION/TRIP INTERRUPTION INSURANCE, WHICH COVERS YOUR COST IF YOU NEED TO CANCEL OR INTERRUPT YOUR TRIP for medical reasons, trip delay, lost baggage, and other unforeseen emergencies. Adventures in Good Company will send you information about travel insurance with your registration information, or you may purchase coverage through your own insurance company. In order to avoid disappointment and expense in the event that you must cancel your trip we strongly urge you to purchase some type of insurance coverage. You can also sign up for it online at Travelex Insurance. To get the best rates, use 20-0016 as your location number on the Get A Quote page.

PACKING LIST

FOOTWEAR

- 1 pair of light- or mid-weight hiking boots, must be waterproofed
- 1 pair of comfortable shoes for general use
- 3-4 pairs of hiking socks (wool or synthetic equivalent: Smartwool, Thorlo, Darn Tough)

CLOTHING

- 2 pair of comfortable supplex/nylon long pants for hiking - zip-offs work well
- 1 pair of shorts (should be quick-drying nylon). Zip offs can be used for this
- 2-3 synthetic or lightweight merino wool T-shirts or short-sleeved shirts
- 2 lightweight, long-sleeved shirts for hiking - button up front is the best
- 1 pair lightweight long underwear top – silk, wool or synthetic equivalent
- 1 medium-weight top layer – synthetic or wool pull over - fleece or wool vest works well for this layer
- 1 warm fleece or lightweight down jacket
- 1 rain jacket and rain pants – waterproof/breathable fabric like Gore-tex - not a plastic poncho
- Underwear/nightwear
- 1 pair wool, Capilene, or Polartec gloves
- 1 warm/lightweight wool or fleece hat or buff
- 1 wide brimmed or baseball style hat for protection from the sun/rain
- 1 – 2 changes of casual clothes to wear at end of day

TOILETRIES (small everything)

- Toothbrush, toothpaste, dental floss, hand sanitizer, shampoo, contact lens paraphernalia, sanitary supplies
- Sunscreen and lip protection with sunblock of at least SPF 15
- Personal first aid/patch kit - Band-Aids, 1 safety pin, moleskin, compeed (or blister bandages), ibuprofen, electrolytes/vit C, peptobismol tablets, any personal medications

Please note: Individuals who have had or have the potential for a severe allergic reaction to insect stings, specific foods or medications must bring an epi-pen. Please consult your physician and tell your guide.

EQUIPMENT/ESSENTIALS

- Passport and copy of passport**
- 1 pair Trekking poles (required)
- 1 daypack (see notes on packing list for recommended capacity)
- Rain cover for your daypack
- Sunglasses (100% UV protection) w/retention strap
- Small headlamp or flashlight
- Ear plugs (for a good night's sleep!)
- Tupperware-like container for sandwich/lunch
- Capacity to carry 2 liters of water (Please see Notes on Packing List)
- small pack towel
- 1 – 2 bandanas/buff
- Wristwatch/travel alarm clock
- extra ziplock bags

OPTIONAL (personal preference, not required)

- Camera (extra battery) and film/memory card
- Book, notebook, journal, pencil/pen
- Washcloth (typically European linens do not include washcloths)
- Your favorite snack (snacks will also be provided)
- 2 pair synthetic, lightweight liner socks (optional -- not everyone uses sock liners)
- Short Gaiters
- Electrical adapter/plug

NOTES ON PACKING

Adventures in Good Company's packing list covers everything you need to assure your safety and comfort. You may not use everything you bring; however, you need to come prepared for all possible weather conditions. At the same time, you must be able to carry your own luggage, sometimes up and down stairs. As space for luggage on our trips is limited, please stick to the packing list as closely as possible.

Daypacks: Your daypack should be large enough to hold the following items: 2 liters of water, rain gear, lunch/snacks (for the day), sun screen, warm layer (fleece pullover or vest), personal first aid kit, lightweight gloves, warm hat and personal items such as camera, etc. We recommend a daypack with a capacity of between 1800 and 2400 cubic inches with a hip belt, padded shoulder straps, and 'lifters'. Bring an elasticized pack cover that fits snugly over it. Before you leave home check to be sure that it is comfortable to wear all day and has sufficient space for all of your items. Note: Fanny-packs and hydration packs are not large enough to hold all the items you will need for the day.

Footwear: Well-fitting boots are very important to your safety and enjoyment. If you plan to buy new boots, break them in by wearing them around town and taking some short hikes before your trip. For general hiking, lightweight or midweight cordura or leather boots with a Vibram sole work well. If you have weak ankles or are recovering from an ankle injury, get boots that come above the ankle— you'll find that this will give you more support in uneven or slippery terrain. Remember to waterproof your boots before the trip. Even boots billed as 'waterproof' need to be treated with a waterproofing product.

Personal First Aid Kit: Bring a small first aid kit with familiar medicine and first aid supplies you might need. Recommendations include the following: blister or foot remedies like moleskin, Compeed, blister bandages, or similar, a small roll of duct tape (always useful!), remedies for respiratory ailments, stomach ailments, sore muscles or joints. The guides will have a first aid kit but having what you know works well for you is a good idea.

Clothing: The clothing listed on the packing list has been chosen for your specific trip conditions and for its versatility for layering. NO COTTON for your active wear! It should all be made from synthetic/synthetic blends, down/down blends or wool/wool blends. Layering is the most practical and efficient method of insulating the body. Several layers of varied weight materials provide better insulation than one thick layer of clothing. Also, adding or subtracting layers allows you to adjust to the temperature at your particular level of activity.

Rain Gear: You will need a parka or jacket made of a coated nylon or a waterproof/breathable fabric like Gore-tex, HellyTech, Membrane, H2No, or Ultrex. Be sure it keeps water out. Before making this important purchase, be sure that it fits you properly. It should be large enough to fit over all your layers. In particular, the hood needs to be effective. It should shield your face from the rain and turn with your head. Movement of your arms must not interfere with the hood. Put on your daypack; can you still raise your arms? Your wind/rain pants should be comfortable, allow enough room for your layers, and permit free movement of your legs (for example, can you crouch comfortably?). Partial or full-length leg zippers are useful for easily putting your pants on over your boots. An inexpensive plastic poncho will both leak and tear easily and is not recommended.

Hydration: Being able to easily access your water without assistance, so that you can drink frequently, is important to your safety and enjoyment. One method is to have a water bottle attached to your waist strap. Another option is to use a **HYDRATION SYSTEM** such as CamelBak, Platypus, and MSR bladder bags, which are collapsible water bags with a hose attachment that you drink from. The bags fit inside or outside your pack with the hose positioned over your shoulder so that you can access your water as you hike. Bladder bags can hold 1 - 3 liters of water.

Trekking Poles: Trekking poles are required for this trip. Trekking poles contribute to your safety by improving your balance and stability, and to your health by saving stress on your hips and knees. If you are not familiar with trekking poles, read this blog post that addresses the most commonly asked questions: <http://blog.adventuresingoodcompany.com/blog-women-travel/bid/154714/Trekking-poles-for-hiking-trips-the-4-most-common-questions>.