Ultimate Northern Croatia, Istria & Slovenia
A Private, Historical and Cultural Tour of Northern Croatia, Istria & Slovenia
**Featuring Extraordinary Experiences:**
Private wine & Olive oil tasting in Istria

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**THE FOLLOWING IS JUST A SUGGESTED DAILY TOURING SCHEDULE. YOU WILL HAVE COMPLETE CONTROL OVER YOUR DAILY SCHEDULE AND MAY CHANGE YOUR PLANS AT ANY TIME BY SIMPLY TELLING YOUR GUIDE. YOUR TIME IN EUROPE IS YOURS TO ENJOY AS YOU LIKE!**
**Why Exeter International?**

At Exeter International we have been creating memories and crafting our trademark extraordinary journeys to Central Europe, Russia, and Central Asia for 23 years. Our specialty is to distill the best of the best in iconic places that are on so many people’s travel must-do list.

We are not a call center of nameless, faceless people. We do not try to be everything to everyone. We are a small team of specialists. We are all committed to providing the best travel experiences to our destinations. Each member of our team has travelled extensively throughout our destinations, giving them insider knowledge lacking in many other tour operators.

Our Extraordinary Experiences are different, unusual, and often closed to the general public. We can offer special insider access that takes you beyond the typical tourist sites. We know how important it is to remain authentic and increasingly going beyond the well-known sites is what is important to our guests—discovering the little known museum or street market that adds to their experience. We do this through our local knowledge, cultivating our extensive contacts and regularly visiting each destination to enable us to share the most up-to-date insider information with you, our valued partner.

The most important part of your trip will be your guides. Guides come in many quality levels, especially in Russia. We have worked with a core group of the best of the best for over 20 years. We know them like family and if they weren’t the best, they wouldn’t work for us. Simply stated, a guide can make or break your experience. You should have 100% confidence in who is introducing you to your guide and the level of guiding that you are going to get throughout the countries you will be visiting. The best does indeed cost more and we pay our guides at the very top of the market, with pride.

You’ll also want to know what kind of vehicle your tour will include. We use luxury late-model vehicles, often Mercedes, Audi, BMW, or Volkswagen, depending on the size of the vehicle you need. You’ll want to see things that may or may not be open to the public and go in early or after hours before the crowds whenever possible. We also make every effort to skip lines whenever possible. Avoiding long museum lines is one of our top priorities and we work hard to minimize the wait time to get into the most popular sights in each city, maximizing your time in each destination.

You’ll want impeccable planning and someone to bounce ideas off of before your trip and speak English as well as you do while planning your trip so there are no cultural misunderstandings when you arrive. You’ll also want someone to talk to if your trip is not perfect when you get home. These are all ways that we distinguish ourselves from all other companies.

A lot goes into our travel program design. We arrange the program so that it is flawless and effortless for our travelers from the time they set foot in the first city until they leave us. The expertise to set up an itinerary like this comes after years of investing in staff on both sides of the Atlantic, and this too is a value that is incorporated into our traveler’s trips with us.
ARRIVAL IN ZAGREB

Afternoon arrival into Zagreb. Your driver will meet you outside of customs to transfer you to the historic Hotel Esplanade, in the center of the city. The Esplanade was originally built by the Orient Express Train Company for guests to overnight as they traveled between Western Europe and Istanbul. After a careful restoration, the hotel is back to its original splendor but with all modern day luxury amenities added. Staying here is a true treat and a journey back in time.

While it has only been the political capital of Croatia since 1991, Zagreb has long enjoyed the influence of both the Eastern and Western culture. In medieval times, Zagreb consisted of two separate towns, Kaptol, the religious center, and Gradec, the commercial hub. The river Medvescak in-between the two towns was often the site of fierce battles between them. Today, Gradec and Kaptol together form the Upper Town, or Gornji Grad, which forms the historic Old Town of Zagreb. The Lower Town, or Donji Grad, on the plains is more chic and contemporary. Don’t worry, your guide will help you understand all this and even assist with pronunciation!

EXETER SERVICES
Airport Transfer

HOTEL
Esplanade
This morning, your guide will take you to Gornji Grad (Upper Town) for your tour of the historic heart of Zagreb. The best way to get around the Old Town is on foot, so wear your most comfortable walking shoes. If you happen to be in Zagreb on a Saturday, you will find a bustling market square – full of locals out shopping and socializing.

Begin your stroll with a visit to the Dolac, the open-air fruit and vegetable market in Old Town and the Church of St. Mary and the towering spires of St. Stephen’s Cathedral, the most prominent landmark on the city’s skyline. As you approach the front of the church don’t miss the ornate sculpted doorway. The Cathedral contains the tombs of the most important personalities in the history of Croatia including Ivan Mestrovic, the famous Croatian sculptor. While in the Old Town, don’t miss the historic stone city gates and the booming cannon of the Lotrscak Tower! Before leaving the Upper town, stop by the 17th century church, dedicated to St. Catherine.

Step inside the Mimara Museum’s extensive collection of art from around the world. Your guide will help bring to life some of the extraordinary pieces of the collection. Objects on display include an awe-inspiring collection of European artists, icons from Russia and the Middle East, magnificent carpets from Turkey and Morocco and several other artifacts from places as far reaching as India and South America.

At the end of the day, enjoy the charming ambience of the cobble-stoned streets of Lower Town (Donji Grad) full of boutiques, cafes and bookshops. You might want to explore a bit more on your own with a visit to the quirky Museum of Broken Relationships. Alternatively, delve into Croatian art at the Croatian Museum of Naive Art.

Note: All services today are on foot. Please wear appropriate footwear.
This morning, depart with your private driver to Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia. Upon arrival in Ljubljana, your guide will meet you and will take you to explore the old mediaeval city with its numerous historical monuments and a dominating old castle, and the world’s second oldest philharmonic society where Gustav Mahler started his career!

Your tour will start off in front of the Baroque Town Hall building, the seat of the municipal government with famous Robba Fountain next to it, and continue across the lively fruit, vegetable and flower market designed by architect Joze Plecnik, past the Cathedral of St. Nicholas. Cross the Dragon Bridge, an Art Nouveau masterpiece adorned with dragons, the symbol of Ljubljana, and stroll alongside the Ljubljanica River to the centrally located Presernov Square.

The remainder of your afternoon is at leisure to enjoy the convivial café atmosphere of Ljubljana.

Note: If you would like a countryside base instead, the itinerary can easily be modified to base you in the town of Bled, right on the shores of Lake Bled.

**Exeter Services**
Transfer Zagreb – Ljubljana; Guide (4 Hours)

**Hotel**
Vander Urban Resort
This morning, meet your driver and guide for a day trip to the charming towns of Bled and Bohinj. Once you arrive, we suggest a morning stroll to the picturesque Lake Bled and a boat ride to the baroque Church of Virgin Mary that stands on an island in the middle of the lake.

Next, your guide will take you to explore the beautiful Bled Castle. In 1004, the German Emperor Henrik II gave the Bled estate to Bishop Albuin of Brixen as a gift. The building was expanded and fortified since then and today there are several buildings that make up the castle complex. The most interesting of them is certainly the chapel on the upper courtyard, which was consecrated to the Bishops St. Albuin and to St. Ingenium. It was built in the 16th century, and was renovated in the Baroque style around 1700, when it was also painted with illusionist frescoes. Today the castle is preserved as a museum, where you will be able to see various exhibits depicting the history of the region.

Proceed to the beautiful Bohinj region that is divided into the Upper and Lower Bohinj Valley. There are twenty-four typical Alpine villages in these two valleys. In the Upper Valley by the lake, visit the gothic St. John the Baptist Church with well-preserved frescoes from the 15th and the 16th centuries. The journey continues with a cable car ride to mountain Vogel (5000 feet), from where there is a wonderful view of the Lake Bohinj and the Julian Alps. Return to Bled through the scenic Lower Valley.

**Exeter Services**

Vehicle, Driver and Guide (8 Hours)

**Hotel**

Vander Urban Resort
Ljubljana - Rovinj (Istria)

This morning, your driver will meet you for your journey west from Ljubljana into the Istrian Peninsula. You will arrive into the beautiful coastal city of Rovinj and the remainder of your day is at leisure.

The facilities of your hotel include a wonderful spa and a gorgeous pool. We suggest that you stretch your legs with a bicycle ride through the countryside, as the adjacent park offers bicycle rentals and the views are stunning.

Exeter Services
Transfer Ljubljana - Rovinj

Hotel
Hotel Lone or Monte Mulini
ISTRIA

This morning, your driver and guide will meet you to explore the Istrian peninsula. Today you will drive down the western Istrian coast along the Adriatic Sea to Pula, at the southernmost tip of the Peninsula.

Pula is a story of fortunes gained and lost. It gained fame under the Romans during the 2nd century BCE, and became an Episcopal seat of power during the 5th century. It was sacked by the Ostrogoths but regained power under the Byzantines as a naval port during the 6th and 7th centuries. It fell into decline until the Austro-Hungarians gained power and established their naval fleet here. The ancient barracks of the Austro-Hungarian Empire still house Croatia’s naval forces.

Upon arrival, your guide will take you on a walking tour of Pula. You will start at the historic center of the city at its most famous landmark, the Pula Amphitheater, which dates back to the 1st century – one of the best-preserved Roman amphitheaters in the world. Today it is Pula’s main cultural venue and is known for its music and film festivals.

Continue to visit the Golden Door at the Temple of Augustus, built between 2 BCE and 14 CE, which is dedicated to the goddess Roma and the emperor Augustus. You will also see the City Hall with its blend of architectural styles, the Hercules Gate and the fragments of the city walls, as well as the Forum, the central square of classical and medieval Pula.

As time allows, you may wish to enter the Archaeological Museum of Istria, which contains several exhibits from Neolithic times to the medieval period of objects found in Pula and the surrounding areas.

EXETER SERVICES
Vehicle, Driver & Guide (6 Hours)

HOTEL
Hotel Lone or Monte Mulini
ISTRIA

The interior of Istria is very different from its coast. Your first visit today will be the artist colony of Groznjan. This hilltop town was all but deserted after WWII until being revitalized as a center for artists. Groznjan is also a favorite of musicians, as the International Cultural Centre of Young Musicians has its seat here. You will have time to wander the twisting streets, filled with shops from local artisans, or perhaps to take in an impromptu music or drama performance in the main square.

Riding through the rugged and hilly terrain you will come to the medieval ruins of the town of Motovun, which suddenly springs into view. Motovun is an excellent example of the ancient townships that dotted the Istrian peninsula long ago. We think it’s worth the long trek up to the top of the hill, so eat a hearty breakfast! Motovun is a medieval city that dates back to the 12th century, which thankfully remained intact owing to its hilltop location and walled fortifications.

Later your guide will take you to Livade, the small village in the Istrian countryside famous for being one of the best-known truffle regions in Europe! White Istrian truffles are among of the most expensive mushrooms in the world, and truffle harvesting is a local tradition. We highly recommend stopping for a truffle lunch here; make room in your luggage for truffle oil to take home!

**Exeter International Extraordinary Experience**

This afternoon you will be invited to a private wine and olive oil tasting at one of the private family vineyards in Istria.

**Exeter Services**

Vehicle, Driver & Guide (8 Hours)

**Hotel**

Hotel Lone or Monte Mulini
Istria — Plitvice Lakes — Zagreb

This morning, depart on a three and a half-hour journey with your driver to Plitvice Lakes, one of the most unspoiled natural parks in Europe and UNESCO World Heritage site. Within the national park lie sixteen breathtaking lakes, interconnected by a series of waterfalls, over an area of 70,000 acres, whilst the lakes join together over a distance of five miles.

A local park guide will meet you for a tour of this highlight of Croatia’s natural beauty.

After exploring Plitvice, return to Zagreb for your last overnight.

Note: Today’s touring involves walking over uneven surfaces. Please wear appropriate footwear.

Exeter Services
Vehicle & Driver (8 Hours); Park Guide (3 Hours)

Hotel
Esplanade
DAY 9

ZAGREB - ONWARD

Meet your driver for your transfer to the airport to meet your departing flight.

EXETER SERVICES
Transfer
Continue on to Dalmatia and Montenegro as this itinerary easily combines with an exploration of Dalmatia, to give you a taste of the entire country of Croatia. Please see our Ultimate Dalmatia program for individual travelers for more details.
### What is Included

#### Prices:

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<tr>
<th>For Two (2) guests traveling together</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>From $4,350</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May &amp; October</td>
<td>From $4,475</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>June &amp; September</td>
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<td></td>
<td>July &amp; August</td>
<td>From $4,775</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>For Four (4) guests traveling together</th>
<th>April</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>June &amp; September</td>
<td>From $3,225</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July &amp; August</td>
<td>From $3,425</td>
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All pricing is per person and based on double occupancy. Airfare is not included.
**ACCOMMODATIONS**

**ZAGREB**

**Two (2) nights** at the Esplanade; Tax and Buffet Breakfast included daily.

The Esplanade Zagreb offers 209 spacious and lavishly furnished rooms and suites. This grand hotel opened in 1925 as a stopping point for passengers from the Orient Express train and today maintains its historic atmosphere with old Hollywood-style glamor.

The hotel features one fine dining restaurant and a very popular street-level bistro, along with a cozy lobby bar. The hotel also has a small fitness center and wellness area. The entire hotel, including the restaurants and bar, is nonsmoking.

All rooms feature elegant and traditional decor with lavish marble bathrooms. All rooms feature a separate tub and rainfall shower as well as complimentary WiFi access.

**Superior Room:** These entry-level rooms offer approximately 280-300 square feet of space. They are elegant and tastefully decorated. Bedding is either one king or two twin beds.

**LJUBLJANA**

**Two (2) nights** at the Vander Urban Resort; Tax and Buffet Breakfast included daily.

In a perfect location right under castle hill and on the banks of the river, this boutique design hotel puts guests right in the heart of vibrant Ljubljana. Inside its historic façade you will find a luxury contemporary hotel with just 16 rooms. Four connected historic buildings make up the hotel and the rooftop terrace and pool are a highlight.

All rooms feature light colors and natural textiles in a minimalist and contemporary design style. All rooms offer complimentary WiFi and air conditioning. The hotel’s restaurant offers local cuisine and gourmet snacks. An extensive selection of wine from the hotel’s wine cellar is possible.

**Vander Large Room:** These upgraded rooms offer approximately 325 square feet of space. Bedding is either one king or two twins and views are of the city.

**ROVINJI**

**Three (3) nights** at the Hotel Lone; Tax and Buffet Breakfast included daily.

The contemporary décor of the Hotel Lone features furnishings and designs from Croatian architects and artists, with materials sourced from Croatia, even down to the wooden doors from Slavonia. This large hotel offers 248 rooms and suites, many of which feature views to the bay. The hotel’s facilities are extensive, including several restaurants, a nightclub, an indoor pool and a huge spa area.

The location is perfect, right on the bay and adjacent to the Zlatni forest park. The park offers bicycle and boat rentals and has a small pebble beach. Guests of the hotel can use the huge outdoor pool at the adjacent Hotel Eden and also enjoy the restaurants of the neighboring Monte Mulini.
All rooms feature private balconies and sleek contemporary decor. Bathrooms are generous in size and most feature dual sinks, separate bath and shower and luxurious locally-sourced amenities. Wi-Fi is complimentary.

**Premium Room:** These spacious rooms offer approximately 350 square feet of space and views of the Zlatni forest or the parks surrounding the hotel. Rooms offer the choice of one king or two twin beds.

**Zagreb**  
**One (1) night** at the Esplanade; Tax and Buffet Breakfast included daily.

**Superior Room:** These entry-level rooms offer approximately 280-300 square feet of space. They are elegant and tastefully decorated. Bedding is either one king or two twin beds.

**MEALS**  
No meals included, other than breakfast as described above. Your final documents will include our top recommendations. Your guides will recommend restaurants that fit your exact needs daily.

**SERVICES**  
Private vehicle, driver and guide at your service as described. A full day is generally eight hours in duration. A half-day is generally three hours in duration. The timing for each day is noted in your program.

Exeter International’s local offices are available for your assistance 24 hours per day while you are traveling. Our local staff may also assist you with restaurant reservations and purchasing of additional theater and museum tickets at your request.

**Transportation**  
All transfers to and from airports are included in the program. Unless otherwise noted, all transfer service is with a driver only, not a guide. In general, drivers have limited English-speaking skills. Evening transportation is not included unless specifically noted in your itinerary. Timing for each day is noted in your program.

**Guides**  
Hand chosen for their knowledge on local history, art & architecture. Guides are at your disposal as noted in your itinerary.

**Tickets**  
All entrance tickets as described in the program.
April  From $50 per person (total for 3 nights)
May & October From $250 per person (total for 3 nights)
June & September From $375 per person (total for 3 nights)
July & August From $425 per person (total for 3 nights)

This hotel is, without a doubt, the best in Rovinj, a charming and popular town on the Istrian Peninsula. Hidden in a centuries old Zlatni Park forest and right on the Lone Bay, the hotel is a 20 minute walk to the city’s center. With its 113 rooms and suites, Zen spa with a pool and several saunas, it is the perfect base to relax for a few days or to explore the Istrian Peninsula.

All rooms feature private balconies, satellite television and air-conditioning. Bathrooms are generous in size and most feature dual sinks, separate bath and shower and luxurious amenities. Hotel amenities include indoor and outdoor swimming pools, tennis courts, a basketball court, restaurants, bars and a wine cellar.

Premier Rooms: This is the entry-level room category and rooms average 400 square feet in size with a small balcony or terrace overlooking the sea. Rooms can have either one king or two twin beds. Rooms with a king bed also have a pull-out sofa, making this a great option for families.
BAGGAGE
The vehicles reserved for your itinerary can accommodate up to two medium-sized suitcases per person. If you intend to travel with additional luggage, please advise your travel consultant so appropriate arrangements may be made. In general, we schedule a sedan for parties of two, a minivan for parties of three to four and a minibus for parties of five or more.

SIGHTSEEING
Sightseeing arrangements have been made with your special interests in mind. Your drivers and guides are at your disposal for full or half-day sightseeing programs as indicated in the itinerary. Within those time and mileage guidelines, your driver and guide are at your disposal, so you are free to modify your program as you please. Should you require additional time or mileage, the costs will be quoted on request and may be paid for locally in the local currency or U.S. Dollars.

Every effort has been made to confirm that scheduled sightseeing venues will be open at the time you plan to visit them. However, individual estates, museums, gardens and other points of interest can change their hours of operation at short notice. In the event that a particular attraction is closed on the day or time of your visit, your guide will offer alternative arrangements or rearrange your sightseeing to accommodate these unexpected events.

OPTIONAL EXPENSES
Charges for extra meals, transport, sightseeing services or other optional additions to your established itinerary are your responsibility and must be paid locally in the local currency.

GRATUITIES
Gratuities are not included in your tour price. Gratuities are at your own discretion. We recommend $15-$20 per person, per day for your guide and $5 - $10 per person, per day for your driver. For your airport or station transfer, a gratuity of $5 - $10 is customary, based on service. Dollars, Euros and any local currency are all accepted.

DINING WITH YOUR GUIDE
On days when dinner and lunch costs have not been included in your itinerary (or in your tour cost), you may, at your discretion, choose to invite your guide to dine with your party. You are under no obligation to do so but, if you do extend such an invitation, the guide is your guest and you will be responsible for the cost of his/her meal.

Booking Conditions
PAYMENTS
Exeter International must receive a deposit of 25% of the total program cost before reservations for your independent travel program can be initiated. The balance of payment is due 60 days prior to departure. No reservations are made on your behalf until this deposit has been received. Availability and pricing is subject to change until this deposit is received. All deposits are nonrefundable.

CANCELATION
Written cancellations received less than 60 days prior to departure are subject to the following forfeit of tour cost
- 59-14 days prior to departure, 50% of total tour cost
- 14 or less days prior to departure, 100% of tour cost
REFUNDS
We regret that refunds cannot be issued for arrangements confirmed on your itinerary but unused once your tour has begun.

INSURANCE
Exeter International strongly recommends the purchase of travel insurance to protect your investment. You will find insurance costs noted on your invoice and insurance coverage information in your original booking packet.

PRICES AND ARRANGEMENTS
Once an itinerary is finalized and final payment has been made, a $100 revision fee will be charged if the itinerary is changed.

The tour price includes planning, handling and operational charges. Rates are quoted in US Dollars on the current rate of exchange and tariff as of 2016. Exeter International reserves the right to increase tour prices to cover increased costs, tariffs and taxes, and to reflect fluctuations in foreign exchange markets. Devaluation of a foreign currency will be weighed against any tariff increases imposed. Exeter International does not breakdown costs involved in any Small Group or Individual Travel Program.

All arrangements are subject to availability and modification if necessary.
Prices are subject to change if necessary until paid in full.

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