

EXPLORE!

TRIP NOTES



Alpine Lakes of Slovenia (SO 2017)



TRIPDURATION
8
DAYS



Tour Style: Classic
Tour Pace: Moderate

Tour Type: Small Groups
Accommodation
Grade: Standard

Trip Code: SO

Trip Highlights - Alpine Lakes of Slovenia

- ✓ Lake Bled - Picturesque town with an attractive lake and islet
- ✓ Triglav National Park - Walks in the Julian Alps from tranquil Lake Bohinj and the chance to participate in mountain biking or whitewater rafting
- ✓ Ljubljana - Majestic baroque capital city
- ✓ Skofja Loka - One of the most beautiful small towns in Slovenia
- ✓ Bohinjska Bistrica to Nova Gorica - One of the most scenic train journeys in Slovenia
- ✓ Skocjan Caves - Spectacular UNESCO World Heritage Site
- ✓ Piran - Venetian Gothic architecture of this old Adriatic town

Trip Essentials

Accommodation: 7 nights Standard Hotel

Included Meals: 7 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 dinners

Start Point: Join trip: Ljubljana

End Point: Trip ends: Ljubljana

Maximum Altitude on Trek (m): 700

Transport: Bus, Train, Public Bus, Taxi, Cable Car

Countries: Slovenia

Alpine Lakes Of Slovenia

Glacial lakes, steep mountain cliffs and forested valleys are all part of this trip in Slovenia. We walk along the shores of crystal clear lakes, through grassy meadows and over rolling hills. We also explore the cobbled streets and Venetian gothic architecture of Piran on the Adriatic coast, as well as visit the underground caves at Skocjan and the dramatic Predjama Castle.

Why Book this trip

Discover Slovenia and all its astounding nature from beautiful lakes to breathtaking mountains. This 8 day trip is a great mix of fantastic scenery and gothic architecture.

Suitability

We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's adventure.

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

Accommodation Grade: Standard

Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

Tour Style: Classic

Packed with adventure, these tours offer inspiring destinations and authentic travel experiences at a reasonable price. Using all kinds of transport and accommodation, we'll take you off the beaten track to discover the true heart of the people and places you visit.

Tour Pace: Moderate

These moderately paced tours provide some busy days with plenty of experiences to enjoy, as well as time to relax along the way.

Your trip itinerary

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

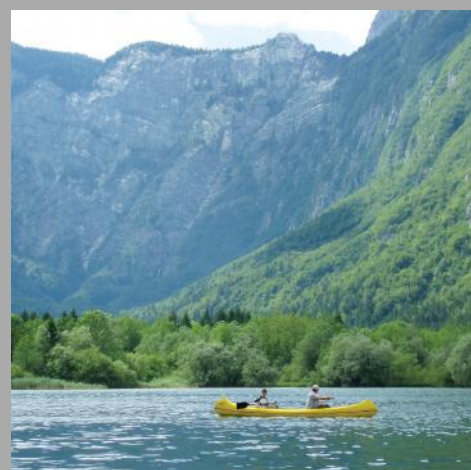
Your Tour Leader

A Tour Leader is an integral part of any Explore tour and your tour will be led by one of our experienced tour leaders who have been handpicked and expertly trained. We believe that our Tour Leaders are the key to the success of our tours; they are passionate travellers who are bursting with first-hand local knowledge which they love to share. Your tour Leader will also take care of all the planning and organisation throughout your journey. Their passionate approach will make this tour fun and inspiring, bringing the destination to life whether you're travelling alone or with others.

DAY 1 Join tour in Ljubljana, capital of Slovenia

Arrive Ljubljana and check into hotel. There may be time this afternoon to explore the centre of the city and take in the vibrant cafe lifestyle along the banks of the river.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available



 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 2 Visit Medieval Skofja Loka and free time at Lake Bled

This morning we drive to Skofja Loka, one of the oldest and most beautiful small towns in Slovenia, dominated by its castle. We will soak up the atmosphere of this medieval town which is now protected both historically and culturally. Later we continue to the picturesque resort town of Bled situated on a tranquil lake. Widely acclaimed as one of the most fashionable European resorts in the early 20th century, this was the home of the Yugoslavian Royal Family and also the summer residence of President Tito. You may like to visit the island by travelling across in a traditional gondola known as a pletne (optional). On the island is the baroque Church of the Assumption and perched on a steep cliff above the lake is the 11th century Bled Castle with towers, ramparts, moats and a terrace. You may also wish to walk the 6 kms around the lake past linden, chestnut and willow trees, swans and water lilies on the water. There are also rowing boats for hire (optional), or you can swim in the lake. Later, we continue to Lake Bohinj. En route if the weather is clear, we may see Triglav, the highest Alpine peak at 2864m. The name means 'Three Heads' and pagan Slovenes believed the mountain was the home of a three-headed deity who ruled the Sky, the Earth and the Underworld. It is a sacred mountain and according to tradition every Slovene should climb it at least once in his or her life. The peak was first climbed in 1778 by an Austrian and three Slovenes, and the mountain features prominently on the Slovene national flag. Lake Bohinj is a naturally preserved glacial lake enclosed by steep mountain cliffs on the southern edge of Triglav National Park - an ideal base from which to explore these magnificent mountains.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 3 Walk to Savica Waterfall in the beautiful Triglav National Park

The Triglav National Park nestles in the Slovene Julian and Kamnik Alps. Founded in 1924, it is one of the oldest Alpine nature reserves covering an area of 82,000 hectares. The Julian Alps is the first of the mountain barriers separating the Mediterranean Sea from continental Central Europe. On our first day we plan to walk to the Savica Waterfall, the source of Slovenia's longest and mightiest river, the Sava. The breathtaking cascade of water tumbles into a pool 60m below. We then take the cable car up Mount Vogel to the ski station at a height of 1535m from where impressive views extend over the lake and the Julian Alps. After exploring the area we take the cable car back down, although you could walk back if you choose. Once back at the lake you may choose to take an easy walk around Lake Bohinj (6.4kms) or hire a mountain bike and cycle quiet country roads.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 4 Free day at Lake Bohinj; option to go walking or join other activities

There are several optional walks to choose from on our second day, which could take us through deep-carved glacial valleys, across rolling hills and past springs, waterfalls, rivers and lakes or you can hire a kayak (optional) to explore the lake itself. The park is rich in flora and fauna (keep an eye open for chamois), and the ground is covered with a rich abundance of flowers; more than 10 species are endemic such as the Zois bellflower, Frolich gentian and Carniola cowslip. Throughout the countryside we will see 'kozolec', a special kind of rack for drying hay that is unique to Slovene regions. Also known as mountain harps, there are over 30 different types. There is also the opportunity to do some river rafting on the Sava Bohinjka river (optional), or horseriding (optional) in the surrounding countryside.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 5 Scenic train ride to Nova Gorica and visit to Skocjan Caves

We take the train from Bohinjska Bistrica to Nova Gorica. This journey is one of the most scenic in Slovenia with a back-drop of the Julian Alps. We pass through the Vipava Valley, a wine-growing region, onto one of the highlights of Slovenia, the amazing underground caverns at Skocjan, which have been protected by UNESCO since 1986. These 5km long caves descend 250m into a gigantic hollow into which a river disappears. Prehistoric people once sheltered in these caves and used them to make sacrifices to the gods of the underworld. After a guided tour, we continue to Piran, situated on the Slovenian Adriatic Sea. There are two distinct regions separated by a long shelf of steep cliffs extending down to the Istrian peninsular. In the past, this natural divide has been used as a border between kingdoms: the Venetian coastal lands and the inland domains of the Hapsburgs. Olive and tangerine trees grow in abundance along the 40km of coastline. On arrival, your Tour Leader will take you on a brief orientation tour.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

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 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 6 Free day in Piran to explore and enjoy the nearby beaches

The day is left free for personal exploration. You may like to spend today exploring Piran, a beautiful town full of narrow streets, vaulted passages, arcaded courtyards and Venetian Gothic architecture. Alternatively you could relax and take a swim off the rocks along the coast. Piran is one of the best preserved historical towns anywhere on the Adriatic and is entirely protected as a cultural monument. From the remains of the 15th century walls, there are some great views over the town and the sea. The ancient central square is surrounded by beautiful patrician villas and there is a monument dedicated to the local composer and violinist Giuseppe Tartini.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 7 Visit to Predjama Castle en route to Ljubljana

Today we make our way back to Ljubljana with a visit to Predjama Castle, built into a dramatic 123m craggy cliff en route. This four storey castle dates back to the 16th century and has all the features a castle should have such as a drawbridge, holes in the entrance ceiling for pouring boiling oil on intruders, a dark and dingy dungeon and a 16th century treasure chest. We drive on to Ljubljana, a small, majestic baroque city where we can visit Ljubljana Castle (optional). The original dates back to Celtic times, but the present one was mostly built after the 16th century. After climbing the 150 steps up to the tower, you can walk along the ramparts where there are some great views over the Old Town.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 8 Tour ends in Ljubljana

The tour ends today in Ljubljana.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation Notes

Please note that some of the hotels used on this trip don't have air-conditioning.

Food & Drink

Included meals: 7 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 dinners included in the price of this trip. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

Budgeting for your Trip

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the trip price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Slovenia

Lunch £: 8.00

Dinner £: 15.00

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

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Slovenia

Bottle of Beer £: 2.00

Water £: 0.90

Other Sightseeing & Activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations.

Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Optional Excursions

Lake Bled - Pletne boat ride €14.00; Rowing boats €15.00 per boat; Bled castle €10.00.

River Rafting - On Sava Bohinjka River €29.00.

Triglav National Park - Bike hire €5.00 per hour; Kayaking €7.00 per hour; Horse riding €40.00 for 2 hours (Some experience preferred); Boat trip on Lake Bohinj €9.00; Canyoning €59.00. Allow £5.00 for local transport to and from optional walks in Triglav National Park.

Piran - Boat trips along Adriatic Coast €20.00. Salt Pans €7.00

Ljubljana - Castle Museum €7.50

Tipping - Tour Leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Foreign Exchange

Slovenia

ATM Availability: Major towns and cities have ATMs for cash withdrawal.

Credit Card Acceptance: Credit cards are also generally accepted.

Travellers Cheques: Accepted in most banks but not all money changing facilities.

Local Currency: Euro.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: Pound Sterling and US Dollars can be exchanged for the local currency.

Where to Exchange: Most major towns and cities - your Explore Leader will advise you on arrival. Only exchange money at reputable places like banks, ATM's and official Forex Offices.

Joining your Trip

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found on our website at www.explore.co.uk, in the tour specific dates and prices section.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer. For more information please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Important Information

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

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CAMPBELL IRVINE
DIRECT TRAVEL INSURANCE



Travel Insurance is essential. If you have not already arranged cover, please contact our recommended Travel Insurance providers www.campbellirvinedirect.com/Explore who offer Travel Insurance specifically designed to cover travel with Explore or call **Campbell Irvine Direct** on Tel: 020 7938 1734

Explore Worldwide is an Introducer Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Ltd who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Travel Aware

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link at www.explore.co.uk/travel-safety

We strongly advise that you register with the FCO to receive updates to the travel advice for your chosen destination. A hard copy of the current FCO Travel Advice for your chosen destination is available by contacting cr@explore.co.uk or 01252 379438.

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Visa Information

Slovenia: Visas are not required by UK, US, Canadian, Australia and New Zealand citizens.

Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office. You should confirm all visa related issues with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Vaccinations & Protection

Slovenia

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend being up-to-date with your routine vaccination courses and boosters as recommended in the UK including protection against measles, mumps, rubella, tetanus, diphtheria, hepatitis A, typhoid and polio. Tick-borne encephalitis protection is recommended by some medical sources at certain times of the year. Ticks are most active between spring and late autumn. Check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider. Vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.

Preparing for your Trip

Maximum Altitude on Trek (m)

700

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Trekking Details

A variety of optional walks are available with a maximum of 5 hours walking per day. We have graded these walks as easy.

Walking Boots

Bring walking boots with ankle support and good tread for the Julian Alps.

Climate

Slovenia

Slovenia has a continental climate, with warm summers and the possibility of some rain in the Julian Alps. There is an average of 5-6 hours of sunshine in April, May, June and September and 7-8 hours in July and August. Seasonal weather patterns can be unpredictable. In the capital, Ljubljana, in spring and autumn temperatures average at around 15°C, with April being cooler at around 9°C, and in summer the temperatures average at 20°C.

Clothing

Pack for hot weather for July and August departures. Temperatures are cooler in the Julian Alps so a fleece is essential plus a windproof/water-proof jacket whilst hiking. Remember to bring your swimwear.

Equipment

We recommend taking a water bottle, insect repellent, and sun cream. You may find a walking pole useful. You may also wish to bring a swimming costume and towel.

Footwear

Bring trainers/sandals for general travel.

Luggage: On Tour

One main piece of baggage and a daypack. Remember that you are expected to carry your own luggage – so don't overload yourself. Luggage allowance on trip: 20kg

General Information

Country details

Slovenia

Population: 2,064,188

Size of Country: 20,273 square kilometres

Major Language: Slovene

Religion: Roman Catholic

Time Difference to GMT: +1

Electric Supply & Plugs

Slovenia

2 Pin Round

Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years' experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures, self-guided, private journeys & tailor-made holidays.
- Award winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one of the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, or any number of unusual forms of transport. Often you will stay in family run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to – and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

Cool Earth

Explore are proud to support Cool Earth in their effort to reduce global carbon dioxide levels through the prevention of deforestation in the South America rainforest. Cool Earth focus on areas in immediate danger of deforestation, supporting local communities to be forest guardians. To date 350,000 acres of rainforest has been protected. Saving rainforest also protects rare animals and plants, allows local forest communities to maintain their way of life, and protects a major source of oxygen and fresh water. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year.

Earth Matters

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups, respecting local cultures, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people) and have recently supported women's cooperatives in Borneo and Morocco. We are a member of Tourism Concern's Ethical Tour Operator Group (www.tourismconcern.org.uk) and support their campaign for fair and ethical tourism. We also care passionately about the world's wildlife and actively support and promote the Born Free Organisation and Mahouts Elephant Foundation.

Booking Your Holiday

Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is 'Available' or 'Guaranteed' we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

For Self-Guided holidays and Private Journeys simply choose your date of travel and let us know so we can confirm all ground services.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% non-refundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking

100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2016 and 31st December 2017.

Trip Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 2017 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2017. 2018/19 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2018.

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