

Multi-day walking tour in a Croatian and Slovenian part of Istria

Istria

Istria is a peninsula with an Italian headland in the west, and a part in the north belongs to Slovenia and most of it consists of the westernmost county of Croatia. Surrounded by the Adriatic Sea. According to Wikipedia, tourism in Istria dates back to Roman times and the well-to-do citizen from the Hungarian-Austrian dual monarchy already knew how to appreciate the peninsula. Already in the 60s of the last century you could book eight-day bus trips to Opatija or Pula: beautiful old port towns on the Adriatic Sea. Two bus days out, two days back and two hot meals in southern Germany! Where else! (because: no garlic). The coastal regions of the peninsula are still extremely popular with tourists. For the hiker, the largely untouched, much quieter interior of the peninsula is more worthwhile. A few years ago we made a six-day hike, partly through the Croatian part, partly through the Slovenian part.



The walking tour

Possibly because of the popularity of the coastal regions, there was not much information to be found in advance about the hiking possibilities in the interior. With which the motto became this trip: "we'll see!" Such an appointment alone can be reassuring and liberating. It relieves you of the task of reaching a predetermined place to sleep on time. Or keep in mind that you don't miss anything you've read beforehand. Or do you think the advice of a family in whose garden of their holiday home you accidentally walked in to walk towards Momjan is worthwhile, then you do. No strings attached. "*Tamo vrlo lijep dvorac,*" the family said. Now it turned out that the recommended castle was no more than a ruin, but the road to it was beautiful! Ovineyards, vineyards and church towers on the inhabited hills. The Italian influences are clearly felt. Istria has the same ancient towns, pastel-colored houses, rolling hills. The comparison with [Tuscany](#) is obvious. "*Agroturizam*" became a household name after the first night in such a *sleeping-at-the-farmer* facility. Including a fine wine and a delicious meal.

Buzet

When the farmer inquired the next morning what our plans were this day, his reaction was a mixture of disbelief and disgust. *I to ne radiš!* So what? And that was a bit with his car on the way (the son also happy again) and then walking on to Buzet. Again a beautiful walk through a hilly landscape. Buzet on the Mirna river with many Italian influences, both in the architecture and in the number of

pizza restaurants. Furthermore, you will notice that almost everywhere the truffle is performed, at every turn, but who cares. Amsterdam is also full of clogs in summer.



Buzet

Crossing the border

The next day cross the border to the Slovenian part of Istria. Now Slovenia has been a member of the EU since May 2004 and Croatia only years later. In other words: without preparation, this would become a kind of refugee border crossing. And it was. But a very nice one! Inhabitants of the village of Crnica had set out a marked hiking trail (blue-white-red hearts) that led through the mighty rocks and ended up with a kind of glacial tundra, of impressive vastness and beauty. The route explanation by the Kovačić family took more than an hour and with a few large glasses with delicious Kremšnita for the condition, the climb was started. If you have not prepared everything, chances are that you will experience wonderful exciting small-childlike feelings of forbidden-and-yet-doing. By the way: we do not recommend it. Because: forbidden. The stage ended in Gračišče, Slovenia. Where the owner of the *sobe*, say B&B, put us on the trail of special frescoes.

Hrastovlje

From here it is a two-hour walk to Hrastovlje and the enthusiast can indulge in the medieval frescoes in a three-aisled walled Romanesque church. The Holy Trinity Church from the 12th century. The frescoes from 1490 show, among other things, the creation of the world, the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, the work of farmers in different seasons and the famous Dance of Death. The Danse Macabre. The latter is the most famous part of the fresco. Fascinating! See also [video on our website](#).



Holy Trinity Church Hrastovlje with the Danse Macabre



Gastronomy. Pljukanci is a traditional pasta

The final days went through the beautiful hill country with the villages on the steep hills between Gračišče and Koper. Through the Dragonja valley. There is no shortage of vineyards. Finally, to be taken by the now well-known *sobe* owner in Gračišče to the airport of Trieste (Italy). Only 25 kilometers.

General route tips

- There's a good chance that there is currently a better infrastructure for the hiker in the area. Such as the presence of marked routes of signposted walking routes.
- We do not yet have any advice for the reader for a good hiking map. The Rother hiking guide Istrien (German) describes 50 walks on the peninsula.
- The airport of Trieste is the obvious choice. The city itself does not have much to offer. Venice is still 160 kilometres away to the west.....
- In about 1.5 hours by bus you are in Buje, where we started our tour.
- If you want to combine your walking tour with a city visit, think of Croatian Rovinj or Poreč, on the west coast, or Motovun on top of a hill.
- Free camping is officially not allowed in Croatia and Slovenia.
- Try to avoid the tasteless Western cholesterol bombs of fast food in the restaurants and orient yourself to the original Istrian cuisine. Wandelmagazine.nu is not about gastronomic highlights, but you can rightly call Istrian cuisine "a paradise for gastronomes". *There really isn't a need for a truffle.....*



Dragonja valley



"Border crossing" Slovenia ("Schengen?")



en route



kremšnita



Hidden beneath thick layers of plaster, nearly perfectly preserved medieval frescoes were discovered in 1949, covering almost every inch of the walls and ceiling of the church. The artworks were completed in 1490 and have remained unchanged ever since.

The Danse Macabre