

Slovenia & Monte Zoncolan

Off the beaten track - experience the stunning mountains of Slovenia, Austria and Northern Italy on this next to perfect European road cycling holiday!

Summary

WHERE: Slovenia, Austria and Northern Italy
DISTANCE: to suit you
TIME : 6 days
PRICE : see website
DATES: Jun, Jul & Sep



Highlights

Flexible itinerary to suit everyone

Explore the Triglav National Park

Optional ascent of the infamous Monte Zoncolan!

Experience cycling up the Mangart Saddle and the Vršič Pass



The mountainous region of Europe, where Slovenia, Austria and Italy meet, is a delight for road cyclists looking for a week of spectacular riding away from the crowds.

We start the week exploring Slovenia's magnificent Triglav National Park with its glacial lakes and glorious towering limestone peaks, the highlights being the Vršič Pass and Mangart Saddle. We then head briefly into Italy to explore the Austrian/Italian border on gravity defying roads that were built to mobilise arms during the Great War.

We end our week getting to know the beautiful but less explored eastern Dolomites, also including (optional!) the infamous Monte Zoncolan.

Assisted by two exceptional guides in fully kitted-out support vehicles, you can ride at your own pace and tailor each day with the route choices available. Daily 'optional extras' (challenge route) make this holiday also suitable for those looking to really push themselves, so it is an ideal holiday for mixed ability groups or couples.

Regardless of whether you opt for the Classic or Challenge route (or a few days of either!) this week is definitely a 'holiday' and riding through the stunning mountain scenery, enjoying the far reaching and dramatic views will leave you feeling invigorated and with a sense of achievement.

We also offer summer Classic Cols holidays in the Alps, Picos, Dolomites and Pyrenees, please check our [website](#) for more details.

Itinerary

Day 0 - Travel Out

Included transfers from Venice Marco Polo VCE airport to Solkan (1hr 30 min). Meet your guides, assemble your bikes and have a welcome briefing and great dinner.

Day 1: Solkan to Ribčev Laz

Our destination is the picturesque lake of Bohinj'sko jezero on the southern flanks of the Triglav National Park. Our Slovenian road cycling adventure starts relatively gently, undulating through unspoilt rural countryside to the base of **Bohinjsko Sedlo (1277m)**. This is a cheeky little climb up through the forest with some changing gradients. From here you have the options of descending to our 4-star hotel on the lake and exploring the surroundings or extending your ride by heading down to Lake Bled (with its iconic island church).

For those wanting a taster of the gradients on Mt Zoncolan, nipping up to the monastery and viewpoint of **Sveta Gora (670m)** first thing in the morning is a good option.

Classic Route

Bohinjsko Sedlo [87km with 1900m ascent]

Challenge Route

Sveta Gora + Bohinj'sko Sedlo + Lake Bled [136km with 2400m ascent]



Day 2: Ribčev Laz to Bovec

Today is all about the **Vršič Pass (1611m)**, a truly remarkable road on which to cycle a bike. It was built by Russian prisoners of war, so is often known as the 'Ruska cesta'. Its northern flanks are epitomised by 24 hairpin bends, many of which are still cobbled! As the road meanders higher and higher it commands spectacular views of the Triglav National Park. Although challenging, it is definitely manageable as the gradients rarely drift into two figures. From the pass we descend into the lush green valley and onto the mountain town of Bovec, where we stay for two nights.

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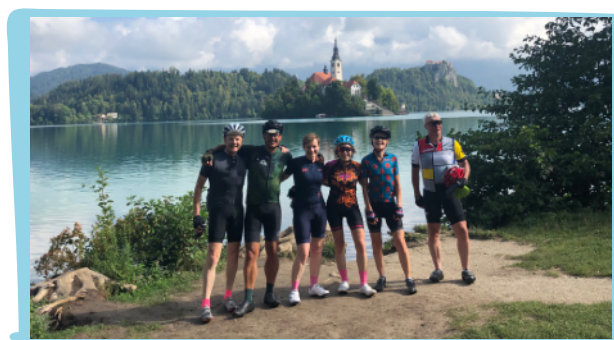
To the base of the climb, there are two good options. The first descends gently to Lake Bled, where we climb slightly before joining the valley road. Our 'challenge' route takes a more mountainous ride back over the cross-country ski haven of **Goreljec (1256m)**.

Classic Route

Lake Bled + Vršič Pass [110km with 1600m ascent]

Challenge Route

Goreljec + Vršič Pass [108km with 2200m ascent]



Day 3: Day Ride from Bovec

The saddle of **Mangart (2055m)** is the highest surfaced road in Slovenia and our destination for today. We start by riding up through the deep green valley surrounded by an amphitheatre of limestone mountains. When we get close to the Italian border, we branch off on a narrow road that winds its way into the high pastures with constant breathtaking views, making this one of the most beautiful road cycling climbs in Europe. What goes up, must come back down and the descent is a true reward for your efforts.

The afternoon can be spent lapping up the ambience of Bovec or taking on the southern (steeper, but no cobbles!) side of the **Vršič Pass (1611m)**.

Classic Route

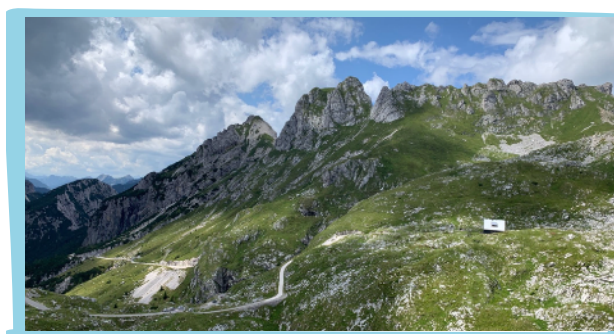
Mangart Saddle [53km with 1700m ascent]

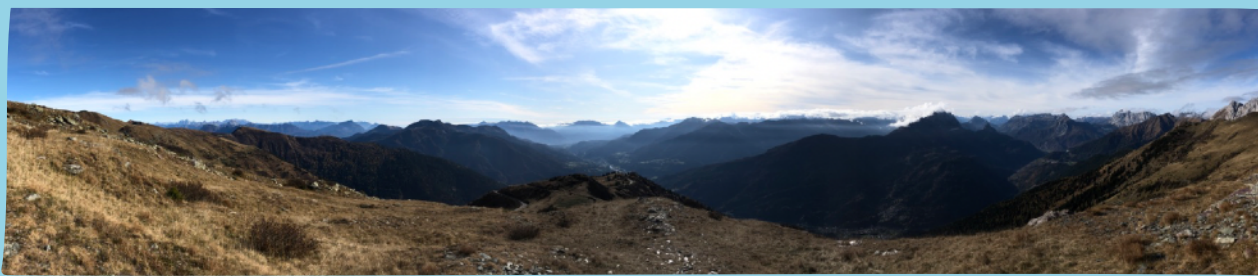
Harder Route

Mangart + Lago Predil [62km with 2000m ascent]

Challenge Route

Mangart + Vršič Pass south [115km, 2900m ascent]





Day 4: Bovec to Tröpolach

We start the day by following the pale blue waters of the Soča river, before heading west to bid Slovenia farewell and climb up the **Sella Carnizza (1094m)**. Here we descend steeply into Italy. Our 'classic' route joins a cycle path that follows the river Fella up the deep gorge to the town of Pontebba (there is the option of transferring this section). Here we take on the **Passo di Pramollo (1530m)**, then descend into Austria for the night.

Today's 'challenge' route deviates from the river Fella and climbs up through a remote but beautiful valley to the **Sella di Cereschiatis (1065m)** before rejoining our 'classic' route at the base of the Passo di Pramollo.

Easier Route (lift up the Fella valley)

[65km with 1900m ascent]

Classic Route

Sella Carnizza + Passo di Pramollo
[85km with 2150m ascent]

Challenge Route

Sella Carnizza + Sella di Cereschiatis + Passo di Pramollo [94km with 2800m ascent]

Day 5: Tröpolach to Ovaro & Mt Crostis

We start the day winding our way gently up a wide, glaciated valley, linking picture-perfect villages before climbing back into Italy over the **Plöckenpass/Passo di Monte Croce Carnico (1358m)**. Following a technical descent, we climb up the **Sella Valcalda (958m)**, which is also no stranger to the Giro. The afternoon can be spent relaxing in the grounds and wellness centre of the hotel or taking on Monte Crostis.

Not many people have heard of **Monte Crostis (1982m)**, but those that have cycled it never forget it! The 14km narrow mountain road averages a relentless 10.1% and climbs 1420m! If you have the energy, this climb (similar to the Gamoniteiro in Spain) will put an everlasting smile on your face!

Classic Route

Passo di Monte Croce Carnico + Sella Valcalda [74km with 1200m ascent]

Challenge Route

Passo di Monte Croce Carnico + Sella Valcalda + Monte Crostis [103km with 2800m ascent]

Day 6: Sella Ciampigotto & Monte Zoncolan

Monte Zoncolan (1735m) is by no means the highest, but is certainly the steepest climb in the area. Introduced into the Giro d'Italia cycle race in 2007 it quickly became a game-changer, mixing things up a bit in the Peloton. With 10.1km averaging 11.9% (including 6km at 15%) today is your opportunity to really give it a go! Fortunately, it is entirely optional and our hotel (where we stay for two nights) is right at the base and is a nice place to relax, so doing a U-turn if the going gets tough is always a possibility!

The 29km of the **Sella Ciampigotto (1790m)** are a wonderful journey, starting in villages with distinctive green-tiled church towers. You will pass through cross-country ski stations and on to high Alpine pastures – the café at the top offers us a warm welcome and views towards the Dolomites. From there we take a journey back in time as we head over the **Sella di Rioda (1800m)** and down into the remote mountain community of Sauris. The valley now holds a deep reservoir, where we have the option of detouring over the **Passo del Pura (1428m)** or continuing to descend through Ampezzo to the valley floor. From there we gently climb back to the hotel to pack up bikes and relax.

Easier Route [62km with 1300m ascent]

Classic Route

Sella Ciampigotto + Sauris loop
[83km with 1680m ascent]

Harder Route

Sella Ciampigotto + Sella di Rioda + Passo del Pura [92km with 2120m ascent]

Mt Zoncolan option

[adds 23km and 1250m ascent to any route]

Day 7 - Travel Back

We offer included transfers from Ovaro to Venice Marco Polo VCE airport - read on for more travel details.



Start & End

Start: Hotel Sabotin: Cesta IX. Corpus 35, 5250
Solkan, Slovenia (+386 5 336 5000)

End: Hotel Aplis: Località Applis 2/C, 33025
Ovaro, Italy (+39 433 619 008)

Travel

Finding flights

We recommend using a comparison tool such as www.skyscanner.net when searching for direct or indirect flights from various airports/regions/countries. It can be helpful if you search for one-way flights, giving results of all direct routes available, eg. 'UK to VCE'. Search results may change as airlines release their schedules for the following year at varying times.

If you are flying long haul, we recommend arriving into Venice a day early in order to get over any jet lag before you start cycling. It is very easy to extend this holiday - Venice is a lovely city to explore before or after and there are a number of hotels which offer complimentary airport transfers (it's a searchable option on booking.com).

Venice is very accessible by public transport with many busses, trains and water busses. If you don't like the thought of lugging your bike box around with you, Venice airport does have a left luggage facility which accepts bikes.

If you are travelling in a group of 6 or more and are unable to join the group airport transfers we may be able to organise a private transfer for you. Please contact us to discuss.

Under your own steam...

If you are going to meet us at the start hotel or are leaving independently at the end of your trip to go

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on elsewhere, please let us know so we can plan accordingly; we may also be able to help you with your travel plans, so do get in touch if you need assistance.

Foreign Travel Advice

For the latest travel advice from the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office including security and local laws, plus passport and visa information, check www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice.

Airport transfers

Marmot Tours offer airport transfers at designated times from the most convenient airport for the start of your trip. Transfers are timed to fit in with as many flights from as many regional airports as possible.

Transfers at set times from and back to **Venice Marco Polo airport (VCE)** are included in the holiday price. The transfer to Solkan on arrival takes about 1hr 30min and the transfer back to Venice Marco Polo from Ovaro at the end about 2hrs, depending on traffic.

If you arrive earlier than the transfer time then you will need to wait at the airport for your pick up. If flights are delayed then transfers may also be delayed. If flights are significantly delayed or cancelled then you may need to take a taxi to the start hotel and make a claim on your insurance or to your airline.

You will find our most up to date transfer times on the **Holiday Details** page on the Link (once you've made your booking). If you need to know the timings before booking, please get in touch via email: cycle@marmot-tours.co.uk.

Navigation

We provide you with colour maps and altitude profiles, as well as detailed directions of where to go. Our guides will even aim to be at those 'easy to miss' junctions and as you will see the van and guides regularly, navigation does not tend to be a problem.

For those of you with GPS units, we have GPS files available and will post them on The Link a few weeks before departure, in .gpx, and .tcx formats.

The files can be downloaded onto most units, including Garmin and Wahoo and in their most basic form provide a purple line to follow. With the more recent units you will also receive a set of visual instructions as you approach a turning. Our GPS tracks take you from hotel to hotel.

Am I fit Enough?

It is normal (and only right) that you should consider whether or not you are fit enough for a cycling holiday in the mountains.

We have created our Classic Cols range of holidays in order to open up the world of road cycling in the mountains to those who may not have experienced it before.

Our Classic Route is an achievable goal for regular cyclists who have never climbed a mountain on a bike before, though we would suggest starting with our Pyrenean itinerary which has even more route options available. Other holidays where the Classic route is considered 'easier' are the Classic Cols of Sardinia, Catalonia and Corsica as well as our Ventoux & the Verdon Gorge and Cevennes & Ardeche tours (although if you like to test yourself, their Challenge option certainly packs a punch!)

Our vehicles and guides are on hand to support you on your holiday and can offer advice, moral support and lifts in the van if you are tired.

Our goal at Marmot Tours is to create an ambience of non-competitive cycling with no pressure to keep up with anyone else. It is about achieving your own individual goals and having a fabulous time doing it.

Am I too fit?

We have designed our Classic Cols style holidays to be accessible to a wide range of riding ability. Having a quick peek at each day's stats for the Challenge route should reassure you that even if you are a very fit and experienced road cyclist, there will be plenty to entertain you on this holiday.

With our daily route options you have the opportunity to cycle all day long, making yourself very tired indeed! If you do our Challenge Route each day then you are looking at at 680km+ with 16600m of ascent during your week, which is comparable to some of our Raid trips. In terms of comparing our Classic Cols Challenge routes, this itinerary is probably slightly easier than the Pyrenean or Dolomites Challenge routes in terms of overall ascent and similar to our Alpine itineraries.

What is so nice about this range of holidays is that you can come along with people who are either less or more experienced than you and you can each get out of it what you want by choosing the daily route for you.

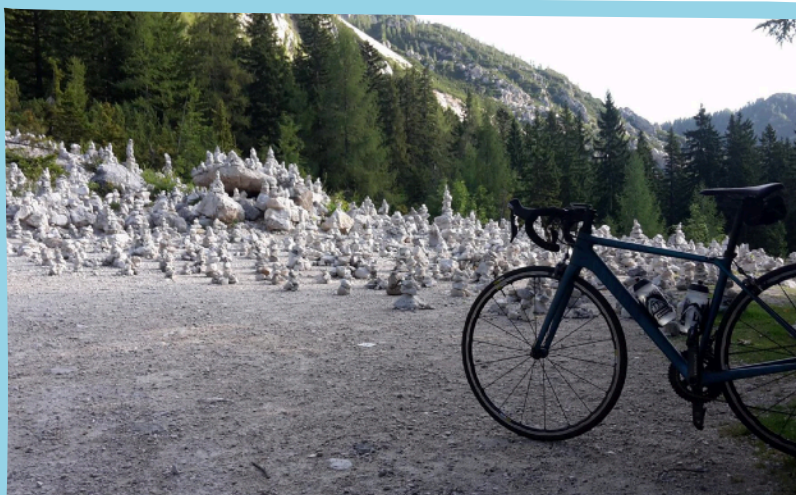
Pacing and Training

As with all sports holidays, the fitter you are, the more you can relax and enjoy the stunning route.

It can be difficult to find extended climbs for training in the UK, but generally, if you can build up your comfort on the bike (ideally on consecutive days) and your stamina and cardio vascular fitness overall, then you will really benefit when it comes to the holiday itself.

As well as training before the holiday, pacing yourself will go a long way towards you achieving your goals. The joy of a group holiday is that you are likely to find someone to cycle at a similar speed to you, so you don't need to try and keep up with your partner/friend/room mate. The quickest way to injure yourself or burn out is to cycle faster than you feel comfortable going.

We can't emphasise enough that this is your holiday and so, if you want a lift up the hill for whatever reason, your guides will be happy to help.



Strava

Many cyclists nowadays are using apps like Strava and Garmin Connect to track their progress, training and to compare themselves to their peers.

These apps make for great training tools and interesting post-ride analysis but there are obvious risks associated with competitive cycling styles, pushing yourself beyond your usual tolerance and focusing on live feed information whilst on the bike.

We therefore ask our clients to avoid such 'Live Segment' features when cycling on a Marmot Tours holiday, especially descending, and to focus on the road at all times.

Gearing/Bikes

Mainly, climbs are not particularly steep (compared to a lot of hills in the UK) but they do go on for a very long time. It is best to make sure that your bike will be suitable for your level of strength/fitness. Those looking at taking on Angliru (optional extra) will certainly be needing a low gear - it is the steepest climb in pro cycling!

For most people a compact (smallest ring on front having 34 teeth), fitted with a 30 or 32 cassette on the rear, is a good choice. It is possible to fit your bike with larger cassettes, using a rear hanger extender, like the WolfTooth RoadLink.

If this all sounds too complicated then we do have some excellent titanium-framed bikes for hire, which are fitted with SRAM 50-34 at the front with 11 speed 11-36 toothed cassettes

Guiding

Supporting you on your holiday will be two of our experienced, approachable, knowledgeable and fun guides. Despite being passionate about cycling, both guides will be in support vans as this holiday is all about you and your needs. Between them they will have knowledge of the area and the language and be skilled at bike mechanics.

Having two vehicles per group (regardless of the number of bookings up to a group size of around 20) is what allows us to offer you freedom to cycle at your own pace with a level of independence on this holiday. One van stays on the Classic route and one van covers the Challenge route. Due to the distances involved, those cyclists doing the full challenge route may need to be more independent than those on the Classic Route. Our guides are experts at advising you on the routes, where you can expect to see the van, and what you might need with you.

In the event that you need help for a mechanical issue (for example) one of the vans will be able to quickly get to you with full tool kits, spare back wheels and even a spare bike. We hope you won't need us for anything serious but being prepared for all eventualities is what we do exceptionally well.

You can expect to see a support van with water, snacks and your personal day bag 2 - 4 times a day, so you don't need to carry much on your bike, unless the weather is exceptional!

Group Dynamics

Your group will be any number up to around 20 riders. This number works really well - it's big enough for you to find others to cycle with at your pace, but not so huge as to feel impersonal! We get lots of clients booking alone and lots of small groups of friends. If you think you can get a group of 18 - 20 people together then we can offer you a custom departure date.

We love that we get a really big variety in terms of cycling experience... from club cyclists, people training for other events, those raising money for charity, ex-pro cyclists and people who are relatively new to cycling who like to try something new on holiday.

Accommodation

We stay in comfortable 3* hotels with ensuite facilities. The hotels have been selected for their customer service towards cyclists and their location. You will be sharing a twin room with another client (of the same gender) unless you book a single room for a supplement (contact cycle@marmot-tours.co.uk for availability). Each hotel has a garage/locked room to ensure that your trusty steed has a comfortable night too.

Food

Breakfast

No surprise that this is the crucial meal of the day. All hotels have a buffet style breakfast with cereals, eggs, meats and cheeses. We supplement hotel breakfasts with cereals and fruit.

Lunches

You know what you like to eat when you are riding and it is not likely to be the same as what the others in your group will want to eat. We don't include lunches so there are no enforced group stops. We strongly advise that you stop for proper food at lunchtime. Each day we recommend a suitable place serving cyclist friendly food which is great for you, and the locals appreciate your custom. We will be sure to have a van there for your midday faff!

Snacks

Your support van aka snack-shack will be well stocked with a variety of tasty delectables: Salty crisps, bars, cakes, fresh fruit (bananas obviously!), nuts & sweets are the staples. We suggest you bring your own favourite energy powders/gels/bars with you as these will not be easily available en route.

Dinner

We eat as a group in the evening - either in the hotel or at a nearby restaurant. Expect three courses (and generous portions) which are tailored to the needs of cyclists. Dinner will be served at around 19.30. Wine at dinner is included, however, coffees/soft drinks and beers are not.

Special diets

Please note your special dietary requirements on the booking form or contact us. Our hotels can cater for most dietary needs and allergies if we know well in advance. Please note that we request that you stick to your dietary preference for the entire trip, as it is very complicated for the hotels (and guides) if an individual is vegetarian for some meals and not for others.

What's Included?

- 6 days supported riding
- Airport transfers on arrival and departure days at specified times
- Route notes, directions, maps and GPS files
- 7 nights half board accommodation including wine at dinner
- 2 customised and well stocked vehicles with experienced guides, offering moral support, and nutritional, mechanical and first aid assistance, plus snacks & water



Bike Hire

Marmot Tours has an excellently maintained fleet of custom built, titanium framed bikes available to rent for your holiday. Advantages of rental include:

- avoiding hefty fees levied by airlines for transport
- worry free travel (knowing your trusty steed is safely stored away at home!)
- the chance to try a titanium bike built specifically with climbing cols in mind (gearing!)
- relinquishing responsibility for cleaning and maintenance to our experienced team

Please see our [Bike Hire webpage](#) for details like prices as well as full specs and dimensions.

Please note that despite the size of our fleet steadily growing, we cannot guarantee that we will have a bike in your size available. If you would like to hire a bike, please check availability before booking your holiday.

How to Book

1. Email cycle@marmot-tours.co.uk to check availability for your preferred departure date. Remember to also check availability for single room and bike hire if they are your preference.
2. Bag your spot with a provisional booking for a week or so while you get planning.
3. Log on to or register with our online booking system, The Link (link.marmot-tours.co.uk), to make your holiday booking.
4. Pay the £400 deposit by BACS or by card online. Receive a confirmation email.
5. Confirmed single room supplements and bike hire are being added manually to your balance invoices, so may take a day or two to appear.
6. We'll post regular holiday information and updates on the Link (you'll receive an email notification).
7. You can meet your fellow holiday makers via The Link Forum and share training / travel plans etc.

Insurance

Holiday insurance is **essential** for all Marmot Tours holidays and anyone without insurance is not able to take part in the trip. Please arrange your insurance cover at the time of booking, as this will ensure that you are covered if you incur an injury during training and are unable to go on your holiday. We have a very high cancellation rate so are unable to deviate from our [cancellation policy](#).

Your insurance needs to cover you for non-competitive road cycling (cycle touring) at altitude with the following fairly standard inclusions:

- Medical Expenses
- Repatriation

Some clients also like to ensure they have the following optional items:

- Cancellation cover
- Loss or damage to their bike

NB if you are hiring a bike from us there is an insurance element in the fee so you will not need additional cover.

Once you have arranged your insurance, please add the relevant details to the **Before you go...** section of your holiday on [The Link](#). Unlike your passport and emergency contact details, you will need to add insurance details for every trip you are taking.

This ensures we have the most up to date information and are able to assist you in case you have an accident on your holiday.

Financial Protection

Marmot Tours are members of ABTA, the Association of British Travel Agents.

ABTA and ABTA members help holidaymakers to get the most from their travel and assist them when things do not go according to plan.

As part of our membership contract we are obliged to maintain a high standard of service to you by ABTA's Code of Conduct.

- In line with our ABTA membership (no Y6184), we hold an insurance policy that gives you full financial protection for all funds you pay us for your holiday
- We have full Tour Operators Professional and Public Liability Insurance with specialist brokers Campbell Irvine
- We carry out risk assessments on all of our holidays to ensure we have thought through every detail
- We employ staff with the correct experience and skills to ensure you have a safe and fun trip, and have a thorough training programme each season.

For further information about ABTA, the Code of Conduct and the arbitration scheme available to you if you have a complaint, please contact ABTA, 30 Park St, London, SE1 9EQ (Tel 0203 117 0500).

