MONTENEGRO - £1,415

28th August 2020 - 9th September 2020 (13 days)
Montenegro is one of Europe’s newest countries and, although small, it packs in a large variety of scenery. The route visits all of the country’s highlights including Kotor Bay and the Adriatic Fjords, Lake Skadar, the Tara River Canyon, Durmitor National Park, Lovćen National Park and the Piva River Canyon. There are several demanding ascents and long descents but the views are spectacular. This is a moving-on tour with full vehicle support and one rest day, starting in Shkodër and finishing in Tirana, Northern Albania. Suitable for fit cyclists able to cycle up to 95km per day in hilly and mountainous terrain.

HOLIDAY TYPE: Guided
TOUR MANAGER: Michael Stainer
GRADE: Challenging
BOOKING STATUS: Fully Booked
ACCOMMODATION: Hotel
BOARD BASIS: Some Meals
TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS: Air
ROAD / OFF ROAD: Road
HOLIDAY STYLE: Moving-on
VEHICLE SUPPORT: Full Vehicle Support
HOLIDAY REF NO: 03465

Holiday Itinerary

Friday 28th August
Fly from London Gatwick to Tirana, Albania on British Airways flight BA2648 departing 0745, arriving 1150. Vehicle transfer of 90km to our hotel in Shkodër, Northern Albania. Assemble bikes. Stay 1 night. Meals: D

Saturday 29th August
We begin with a vehicle transfer of 50km that takes us from the flat plain of Northern Albania towards the Albanian Alps. Our cycling begins with an exhilarating descent through a series of hairpin bends into the valley of the Cemi River. We then begin a steady 23km ascent to reach the Bordoleçi Pass (1,360m) before descending to a remote border crossing into Montenegro. Easier cycling alongside the Lju?a and Lim rivers brings us to the small town of Andrijevica. 86km (1,310m total ascent). Stay 1 night. Meals: B D

Sunday 30th August
We leave Andrijevica via a narrow, winding road that ascends steadily through the Komovi Mountains to reach the Trešnjevik Pass (1,565m) and a welcome bar for refreshments. From the pass, the narrow road descends into the valley of the Tara River before crossing the Drcka River and joining a wider, more modern road that runs alongside the Tara River into the town of Kolašin situated beneath the Bjelasica and Sinjajevina mountains. 46km (840m total ascent). Stay 1 night. Meals: B D

Monday 31st August
We leave Kolašin by cycling alongside the Tara River, Montenegro’s second longest at 146km. The river valley begins to narrow as we enter the lower
reaches of the Tara River Canyon. At 78km long, this is the longest river canyon in Europe. We have lunch overlooking the Tara Bridge which stretches across the canyon 165m above the river. The next 10km is uphill as we leave the Tara River and enter the Durmitor National Park. We pass by the town of Žabljak, the tourist centre of the Park, before reaching the remote Etno Selo Sljeme, a collection of A-frame ski chalets offering open views of the surrounding mountains. 95km (1,280m total ascent), Stay 1 night. Meals: B D

Tuesday 1st September
Today’s ride takes us through the Durmitor National Park and begins with a dramatic and remote 8km ascent to the Prvovj Sedlo Pass (1,907m) along the highest paved road in Montenegro. From the pass, the narrow road winds its way down through the mountains before a second ascent to the Prješpa Pass (1,885m). Our descent continues through magnificent limestone scenery and alpine meadows. Leaving the National Park we descend through hairpin bends and rocky tunnels to the shore of Lake Plužine and the town of Plužine for lunch. A steady ascent brings us to Etno Selo Izlazak, a collection of stone and wooden cabins high up on a plateau with superb views of the Piva River Canyon far below. 63km (1,280m total ascent), Stay 1 night. Meals: B D

Wednesday 2nd September
From our remote cabins we undulate along a very minor road above the Komamica River to join the main M18 road heading south. After a morning coffee stop, two alternative onward routes are offered. The shorter route continues on the main road, mainly downhill all of the way, into Nikšić. The longer route takes a minor road that ascends to, and then undulates across, the Kmovo Plateau. The plateau consists of a large number of limestone outcrops and you could be forgiven for thinking you were cycling through the limestone areas of Derbyshire or North Yorkshire! A long descent follows into the town of Nikšić, the second largest town in Montenegro. 46km or 73km (440m or 1,200m total ascent). Stay 1 night. Meals: B D

Thursday 3rd September
Today is one of contrasts as we travel from the highlands down to the Adriatic Coast. We initially head west, gradually ascending, to pass Lake Slansko. The road then passes through a dry, rocky landscape before reaching our lunch stop at a roadside restaurant. The rest of the day is spent pretty much going downhill as we pass through the foothills of Mt Orjen to join the old road to the village of Risan. This narrow and neglected road descends through a series of hairpin bends with dramatic views of the inlet of Boka Kotorska some 650m below. After reaching Risan we cycle alongside the shoreline of the Boka Kotorska, or ‘The Bay of Kotor’, to reach Dobrota on the outskirts of Kotor. 90km (640m total ascent). Stay 2 nights. Meals: B

Friday 4th September
Free day to explore the medieval city of Kotor. Built in the 15th century, the city is still completely encircled by walls with three entrance gates to the west, north and south. The city is overlooked by Mt Lovćen and contains several squares, a cathedral, several churches and a patchwork of narrow streets. Other options include a boat trip or hiring a canoe on the Boka Kotorska. For those that fancy cycling, a circuit of the Boka Kotorska is recommended. It involves a 10 minute ferry journey to cross the sea inlet on the western side and offers magnificent views of Kotor and the various towns and villages along the shoreline with the surrounding high mountains as a backdrop. 42km (130m total ascent). Meals: B

Saturday 5th September
Although short, today is challenging due to the significant amount of ascent. Passing Kotor we ascend the ‘Ladder of Cattaro’ consisting of 25 numbered hairpin bends. We reach the Krstac Pass (940m) signifying the top of the first ascent of the day and a welcome morning coffee or early lunch break. Entering Lovćen National Park (2€ entry fee), we ascend steeply beneath the twin peaks of Mt Lovćen. We reach the mausoleum of Petar II Petrovic-Njegos for an optional visit (5€ entry fee) which, at 1,657m, is the highest mausoleum in the world. It’s then a 7km descent to our hotel in the National Park. There is an option to omit the final ascent to the mausoleum. 38km or 44km (1,430m or 1,630m total ascent). Stay 1 night. Meals: B D

Sunday 6th September
We descend to Cetinje and after a short ascent we turn off onto an old road that descends into a remote valley. Initially the surface is very poor but things improve as we begin a long, winding descent to the village of Rijeka Crnojevića on the banks of the river of the same name. The onward journey to Virpazar is by boat along the river and onto Lake Skadar. This exhilarating high-speed 1 hour journey allows us to admire the surrounding karst mountains and wide variety of birdlife. For those that wish to cycle, the old road out of Rijeka Crnojevića is followed which provides wonderful views of the river meandering amongst the mountains and of Lake Skadar. 29km or 54km (100m or 580m total ascent). Stay 1 night. Meals: B

Monday 7th September
Our final day of cycling takes us alongside the western shore of Lake Skadar which straddles the border between Montenegro and Albania. The road is a bit of a “roller coaster” with three significant ascents and descents. Near the southern end of the lake our final ascent takes us to the Štegvaš Pass (490m) with its fine viewpoint across the lake and into Albania. A long descent brings us down to the flat plain and the main road and just a few km later we cross the border back into Albania. The final 15km within Albania is almost flat and after crossing the River Buna we enter the city of Shkodër, the largest city in Northern Albania. 73km (1,150m total ascent). Stay 1 night. Meals: B D

Tuesday 8th September
For those that want to squeeze in a little more cycling, an optional circular ride to view a spectacular Ottoman bridge is recommended. 17km (80m total ascent). Alternatively, time to explore Shkoder and pack bikes before a vehicle transfer of 90km to Tirana. Stay 1 night. Meals: B

Wednesday 9th September
After breakfast, time to explore Tirana, the vibrant capital city of Albania. Vehicle transfer to Tirana airport for BA flight BA2649 to London Gatwick departing 2140, arriving 2345 where the tour ends. Meals: B

Holiday Summary

Accommodation & Meals
On ten nights accommodation will be in good standard (2- or 3-star) hotels with en-suite facilities; one night will be in ski chalets (3-star) with en-suite facilities; one night will be in cabins (2-star), not all en-suite. All rooms are based on two people sharing. All breakfasts are included and dinners on eight nights. Vegetarian food/fish based meals may be available, but choice will be limited.

Vehicle Support
Transport will be provided for the transfer of the group, luggage and packed bicycles from Tirana airport to Shkodër at the start of the tour and from Shkodër to Tirana airport at the end of the tour. Throughout the tour there will be a support vehicle to carry luggage between hotels which will also be capable of carrying up to three riders and bicycles if required.

Passports, Visa & Health
EU citizens must hold a passport that is still valid on the date of their return to their home country. Holders of non-EU passports are advised to check whether they require a visa. There are no compulsory health related requirements for UK residents, but you are strongly advised to check that your tetanus protection has not expired.

Travel Insurance
Our Booking Conditions stipulate that, for holidays outside the UK, travel Insurance is mandatory. Details of the level of cover needed and other conditions you should check are stated in the Booking Conditions. CTC Cycling Holidays & Tours Ltd cannot accept responsibility for any costs that may be incurred due to insufficient insurance cover.

Price
The price of £1,415 is based on a minimum number of 10 people taking part in the holiday; please note Booking Conditions, clause 3. If there are insufficient bookings by 19th June 2020, we will contact you and return all monies paid.

Price Includes
- Return flights from London Gatwick to Tirana
- Vehicle transfers to and from Tirana airport at the start and end of the tour
- 10 nights hotel, 1 night ski chalet, 1 night cabin, sharing room
- 12 breakfasts, 8 dinners
- Boat trip from Rijeka Crnojevića to Virpazar
- Support vehicle with English speaking driver/guide to transfer luggage and up to 3 riders and bicycles if required
- CTC Cycling Holidays & Tours costs

Price Does Not Include
- Travel to and from London Gatwick
- Meals in transit
- Dinners on 3 nights
- Drinks with dinner
- Lunches or refreshments at morning and afternoon stops
- Entry fee to Lovćen National Park (£2 in 2019)
- Entry fees at any other attractions visited
- Any other fees, taxes, gratuities or personal expenses
- Travel Insurance
- Single occupancy supplement (£220, subject to availability)

Payment Schedule
A deposit of £145 per person is payable upon booking, with the final balance of £1,270 per person to be paid ten weeks prior to departure, by 19th June 2020.

Cancellations
Should you be forced to cancel your booking for any reason you must notify us in writing. Cancellation charges are as follows:

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<th>Written notice received:</th>
<th>Cancellation charge:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Before 19th June 2020</td>
<td>Deposit (£145)</td>
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<td>From 19th June 2020 to departure</td>
<td>100% (£1,415)</td>
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Additional Information
Area Covered By The Holiday
Although Montenegro is a very small country (similar in area to Northern Ireland), it is a country of amazing diversity with many claiming it to be the most beautiful in Europe. There are rugged mountain ranges exceeding 2,000m in height, one of the largest lakes in the Balkans, one of Europe's deepest river canyons and the Adriatic coastline which includes several deep blue inlets reminiscent of Norwegian fjords.

Starting with a short vehicle transfer from the Northern Albanian city of Shkodër, the tour begins with a descent through spectacular hairpins before ascending beneath the Albanian Alps, alternatively known as the Accursed Mountains, to reach a remote border crossing into Montenegro. We then commence an anti-clockwise circuit of the country. We cross the eastern highlands and ride alongside the Tara river with views of the magnificent Tara River Canyon before entering the Durmitor National Park.

We descend into the Piva River Canyon and pass through the Tramontana region in the northwest of the country before making our way to the Adriatic coast and Kotor. A free day allows an exploration of this historic fortified city. Alternatively, a circular ride around the Boka Kotorska, a spectacular fjord, is offered. A long ascent from Kotor brings us into the Lovćen National Park with an opportunity to visit the mausoleum of Petar II Petrović- Njegos, built on the 1,650m summit of Mt Lovćen. Our route continues alongside the western shore of Lake Skadar, one of the largest in the Balkans, before ascending the Štegvaš Pass followed by a descent to the border crossing into Albania and the city of Shkodër.

Rides & Rest Days
This tour is graded as "challenging" and is best suited to experienced touring cyclists. On several days there are demanding climbs but the distances are...
generally modest and a support vehicle will carry all luggage. The roads used are all surfaced and the majority are in good condition, although some of the minor roads have potholes and sections of loose gravel.
It will not be practical to ride as one group, and so you will be free to progress at your own speed. We will regroup occasionally during the day, usually at morning coffee or lunch stops. There will be one rest day in Kotor, although an optional circular ride around one of the spectacular Adriatic Fjords, Boka Kotorska, is offered.

Accommodation & Meals
On ten nights we shall be staying in a wide range of hotels, all with en-suite facilities. One night will be in wooden ski chalets within Durmitor National Park that will also have en-suite facilities. One night will be in cabins, some wooden and some built of stone, not all of which have en-suite facilities. A limited number of single occupancy rooms are available in the hotels for a supplement of £220, but due to the limited number of ski chalets and cabins available, it cannot be guaranteed that single occupancy will be available on two nights.
Breakfasts are included on each day with dinners on eight nights. On the other four nights (two in Dobrota on the outskirts of Kotor, one in Virpazar and one in Tiranà) you are free to make your own arrangements.

Group Information
The maximum number of participants will be 15 excluding the Tour Manager.

Weather & Clothing
The weather in late summer should be generally warm and dry but can be changeable and could turn cold, particularly in Durmitor National Park where we will be riding for extended periods at altitudes above 1,500m. You should carry suitable clothing for cold or wet spells should these occur.

Cycles & Equipment
Touring bikes and lightweight mountain bikes will be suitable if geared for long climbs. Ensure that your bike is well maintained and that you have tools and spares for simple roadside adjustments and puncture repairs. You will not need to carry luggage as this will be transferred, but a bar bag, rack pack or saddlebag will be needed for wet weather gear, camera and snacks etc. The route passes through several short tunnels, so it is essential that you bring front and rear lights.
Hire bikes are available directly from our agent in Tiranà. These bikes are well maintained and the gearing is suitable for the terrain. Please contact the Tour Manager if you require further information.

Maps & Guides
The Freytag & Berndt map of Montenegro at a scale of 1:150,000 covers the entire route including those sections in Albania at the start and end of the tour. Both the Lonely Planet and Bradt guides to Montenegro provide useful background information on the places visited and the area traversed. Detailed maps, route sheets, altitude profiles and gpX files for each days ride will be provided.

Travel Insurance & Advice
Before booking you should check the latest travel advice from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office including security and local laws, plus passport and visa information, at www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice or on 0845 850 2829.

Other Information
Money
The currency in Montenegro is the Euro and in Albania it is Lek (approx.140 Lek = £1). Only a small quantity of Lek will be needed which can be purchased on arrival in Tiranà airport.

Tour Manager’s Contact Details
If you require any assistance, or have any queries, please don’t hesitate to contact the Tour Manager using the information provided below.

Michael Stainer
Email: michael.stainer@icloud.com
Telephone: 01246 559282