

THE BALKAN STATES



Date: 02 – 17 September 2010
Type of tour: Long distance, Adventure, Historical Interest, Mountains & Lakes

This is a tour for those with a real sense of adventure, as you make your way into the depths of Eastern Europe to countries such as Croatia, Montenegro and Bosnia. This 16-day journey across Europe offers an amazing opportunity to visit countries still in transition following years of conflict. It is also for those who appreciate that when travelling to these parts of the world, accommodation and similar facilities are not always to the standards found in other parts of Europe. Our third excursion to the Balkans provides an exciting opportunity to get an insight into this beautiful area with lots going on development wise.

By definition this is a long tour with some very high mileages. We will make the most of the long days, in order to spend as much time as possible uncovering this region's history whilst enjoying its contemporary vibe.

Day 1 (02 September) – Dover to Mereville

The tour begins with an assembly in Dover before the crossing to Calais. During the crossing there will be time for breakfast or refreshments, as well as a tour briefing. Those wishing to travel from Hull to Zeebrugge can do so, subject to availability and a supplement. Once in France, we will eat up the miles on both the Autoroutes and a number of cross-country roads. The venue for the first

night is in the village of Mereville. There is surface parking and an outdoor pool. As this is the first night, there will be a group dinner by the lake in order for everyone to become properly acquainted. (Mileage: 320)

Day 2 (03 September) – Mereville to Milan

After an early breakfast we will set off for a long day in the saddle, continuing south-west across France, through the Vosges Mountains and into Switzerland at Basel. Once across the border, we will use the Autoroute network to cross the country. After Lucerne we will take a wonderful climb over the San Gottard Pass down to Lugano, famed for its Italian lakes. Then on to Milan, where we will stop for the night. Once in Milan, we will make our way to the northern outskirts where accommodation has been reserved. Rooms are air-conditioned, while the hotel offers a restaurant and bar, a large garage, a swimming pool and fitness room. For dinner tonight you can either eat at the hotel or find a local restaurant in town. (Mileage: 335)

Day 3 (04 September) – Milan to Ancona

From Milan, we will ride straight across the valley of the River Po, and on through Parma, Modena and Bologna as we head for the east coast. Eventually, we reach the coast near the holiday resort of Rimini, passing the tiny Republic of San Marino. Further along the coast lies the port of Ancona, where we will catch the overnight ferry to Bar in Montenegro. En-suite cabins have been reserved for everyone and you can enjoy dinner on board before retiring for the night. The ferry departs at 16.00hrs. (Mileage: 275)

Day 4 (05 September) – Bar to Pržno

The overnight ferry arrives in Bar, Montenegro, at approximately 08.00hrs, after which we'll spend a relaxing morning exploring the coastline, or the region to the north of Budva. Accommodation for the next two nights has been reserved at a splendid four star beach resort and

complex near Pržno. All rooms are air-conditioned and come with a balcony. There is a wide range of restaurants, bars and snack bars to eat in, as well as a Casino, indoor and outdoor pools, a sauna, solarium, beauty parlour and massage facilities for you to relax and enjoy yourselves. (Mileage: 25)

Day 5 (06 September) – Free day

Today will be a free day to spend at your leisure. Close by is the old fishing village of Pržno and the beautiful island of Sveti Stefan, while to the north is Budva, with a splendid old town, delightful shops, restaurants and bars. Alternatively, you could visit any part of the Montenegro coast around Kotor, or even take a ride north to Dubrovnik.

Day 6 (07 September) – Pržno to Sarajevo

Today we will leave the coast and ride through Montenegro's dramatic mountain scenery and the Durmitor National Park (a World Heritage Site). We'll then cross the frontier into Bosnia (full title Bosnia & Herzegovina) for the first time. After arranging local bike insurance at the border, we will head for the capital city of Sarajevo. A local three star hotel will be our base for the next two nights, and you will be free to choose your own dining options. (Mileage: 220)

Day 7 (08 September) – Free day

Today will be a free day in Sarajevo, once known as Europe's Jerusalem, where the world's three main religions were practiced in harmony. That harmony, which was broken during the three-year siege (1992 – 95), is returning now. A visit to the Bascarsija bazaar, to soak up the feel of the Ottoman history, is a must. As with most cities, there are a vast range of sights to see and places to discover. The hotel and your Tour Leader will be happy to advise, to make sure you're not missing anything!

Day 8 (09 September) – Sarajevo to Makarska

After breakfast we will head south through limestone mountain country, to the town of Mostar. Here we will

stop at one of the most symbolic features of the Balkans – the Mostar bridge. This has stood for over 400 years, but it was brought down in 1993 by a Croat bomb. It has since been rebuilt, however, it is still surrounded by remnants of the damage caused by the impact which destroyed it. Leaving the sobering and beautiful Mostar and Bosnia behind, we will head for the coast again – this time in Croatia. Our overnight stay will be at the premier beach resort in Makarska, at a luxurious hotel with A/C, satellite TV, Wi-Fi and all the leisure facilities you would expect from a four star establishment. (Mileage: 170)

Day 9 (10 September) – Free Day

This will be another free day to spend at your leisure on the Croatian coast. This could be a day to make the most of the hotel facilities and wellness center, or sit in the sun in a café. Alternatively, for those wishing to ride further a field, 40 miles north is the town of Split. Otherwise, you can take a ferry trip to one of the beautiful islands nestling just off the coast.

Day 10 (11 September) – Makarska to Jajce

From Makarska we will return into Bosnia Herzegovina and continue the ride through the stunning rural countryside. As the overall mileage is quite short, there will be plenty of opportunities for some 'off piste' exploring in this picturesque region. Our destination for the night is in the small town of Jajce in the Plitvice Lakes National Park. (Mileage: 140)

Day 11 (12 September) – Jajce to Bled

Leaving Jajce, we will travel through rural Bosnia before crossing into Slovenia and continuing through the capital, Ljubljana. Once through the city, we will be in the region of the Julian Alps. From here we will ride to the picturesque resort of Bled, where our base for the next two nights will be on the shores of the lake. This is a popular resort and one which World of BMW has visited many times. The hotel is situated in the centre of town, so all the

amenities are within a short walk, and the hotel is suitably appointed for a four star establishment. (Mileage: 275)

Day 12 (13 September) – Free Day

Today is another free day to rest and relax by the Lake, although Bled has much to offer. You can take a row-boat or a pleasure boat on the lake, take a horse and carriage ride, or walk to the castle perched high above the lake. Alternatively, ride to the nearby Vintgar Gorge where you can take a fascinating walk along the narrow river walkways and bridges to the waterfall.

Day 13 (14 September) – Bled to Innsbruck

After leaving Bled we will soon cross the border into Austria, close to Villach. We will then ride east through the rural Austrian countryside, towards Lienz, with a choice of route to our base for the night in the city of Innsbruck. You can either continue into Italy and take the Brenner Pass, or, if you are feeling energetic, ride over the mighty Grossglockner pass – perhaps the greatest pass in Europe for a bike. There is a toll but it is worth every Euro! We will stay overnight in the city of Innsbruck in another new four star hotel. All rooms are en suite and have A/C, Wi-Fi, a minibar, safe and TV. For dinner tonight you will be free to try out the local restaurants. (Mileage: 245)

Day 14 (15 September) – Innsbruck to Triberg

From Innsbruck we cross almost immediately back into Germany, passing the ski resort of Garmisch-Partenkirchen – home to the annual BMW Motorrad Days meeting. We then head north into Württemberg on some open flowing roads, before continuing east towards the Black Forest with its stunning scenery and roads, almost purpose-built for large motorcycles. Our venue for the night is in the tiny town of Triberg at a traditional Black Forest hotel. Surface parking is available, as is an indoor pool for those fancying a quick dip. As usual, all rooms are en suite. This evening's dinner will be a group affair in the four star hotel. (Mileage: 245)

Day 15 (16 September) – Triberg to Reims

The beauty of staying in the middle of the Black Forest is that you have to ride out of it! There are some breathtaking roads as we head north, crossing the Rhine, just south of Strasbourg, back into France. Then, keeping to the open flowing back roads, we will head for the Champagne region where we will finish this long tour in style. Our hotel for the night is on the outskirts of the city, where we will have a final dinner together to reminisce about the adventures of the last couple of weeks. (Mileage: 270)

Day 16 (17 September) – Reims to Calais

After a final buffet breakfast we will start the final run back to Calais. Again, there is a choice of routes. The fastest and most direct takes the Autoroute straight back to Calais, via Reims. Alternatively, there is a great cross-country run along some fabulous back roads. Whichever you choose, the ferry will take us back to Dover in time to complete this great adventure with the ride home. (Mileage: 200)

Rider Price: £1,899
Couple Price: £2,499

Tour includes: return ferry from Dover to Calais, overnight ferry from Ancona to Bar with cabin accommodation and en suite; half board accommodation in Mereville, B&B accommodation in Milan, Pržno, Makarska Sarajevo, Jajce, Bled, and Innsbruck, halfboard in Triberg & Reims; the programme as outlined; all the necessary maps and route details; travel pack; local overnight parking charges; a World of BMW Tour Leader to accompany the group; and VAT

Not included: fuel; meals other than those specified; wine and drinks; local entertainment not included in the programme; any admissions; local ferries; tolls or travel insurance.

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