



## CLASSIC KARST of SLOVENIA and CROATIA

September 8 - 22, 2008

- Mon 8 Depart USA and arrive Munich, Germany en route to Slovenia.
- Tue 9 Arrive in Ljubljana and drive to the Mini Hotel in Skofja Loka. This is one of the oldest settlements in Slovenia, dating back to 973. It is located at the edge of the fertile valley where the Poljanscica and Selscica Rivers merge to form the Sora River. Mountainous highlands rise to the south and west. An afternoon to relax, discuss our plans and review maps.
- Wed 10 An introduction and orientation tour of this medieval town with the opportunity to explore on your own. Our Welcome Dinner will be high on the ridge at a local restaurant.
- Thur 11 An easy drive to Postojna, center of Slovenia's karst region. An afternoon welcome at the Karst Institute by their staff. Transport south of Postojna to the tourist farm Hudicevec which will be our home for the next 4 nights.
- Fri 12 Introduction to Slovenia's karst with a local tour of the remarkable and scenic countryside around Postojna. We will have an overview of all the classic karst surface features including huge collapse dolines and the remarkable disappearing lake of Cerknica. We will learn about the history of modern European cave exploration and the evolution of the concepts and terminology of Western karst science. We will also venture underground in Postojnska Jama (cave) and visit the Biospeleological Station where we will see and learn about the blind and unpigmented cave-adapted salamander *Proteus anguinus* (locally called the "Human Fish").
- Sat 13 More travel through the karst and visit Frenk Facija's Speleo Camp at Laze. Frenk will give us a tour of the camp, which is a wonderful place to use as a base for real cave exploration. Lunch at the camp. Those that wish can have a wild cave trip into Planinska Jama and view *Proteus* in the wild. All caving kit will be provided - overalls, rubber boots, helmet, and headlamp so you won't have to bring any caving gear. Individuals not wishing to go into the cave can go with Mary to sample local culture.
- Sun 14 Morning visit to the Predjama Castle, built in a cave mouth. After lunch some of us will visit another wild cave, Krisna Jama, where all caving kit will also be provided. Those that prefer can spend time on the surface with Mary.
- Mon 15 Drive west to spectacular Skocjanske Jama (Skocjan Caves). This huge and spectacular river cave is 5.8 km long and 250 m deep. Far inside the tourist trail crosses a narrow bridge 45 m above the Reka River. Those that prefer will go with Mary to Lipica where the elite white stallions breed and train. Late afternoon our bus continues south to the Adriatic Riviera where we stay one night and enjoy free time at the historic Hotel Opatija.

- Tue 16 Leisurely drive along the coast, then into the mountains to Plitvice Lakes, Croatia's National Park and World Heritage Site. We will stay two nights at Knezevic Guest House.
- Wed 17 A day in the Park to explore its unusual karst lakes and natural beauty. The waters are oversaturated in respect to carbon dioxide and the waterfalls are huge, active, travertine dams that are actually getting taller with time!
- Thur 18 Travel back to the coast and south via Zadar, a good place for lunch and visit of this historic town. Then on to Split to explore the waterfront before dinner and overnight at the Hotel As.
- Fri 19 Tour the Roman remains of Diocletian's Palace and the local market before driving south to Dobrovnik, the Pearl of the Adriatic. We will have three nights to tour, shop, and rest at the many cafes in this harbor port. Our home will be the Hotel Villas Kolocep on an island with no cars and few people. It has one of the few sandy beaches in Croatia and several hiking routes around the island to remote coves. Paradise for a few days!
- Sat 20 Tour of the old walled city of Dobrovnik this morning and free time for the rest of the day. A water taxi takes us back to our Villas.
- Sun 21 A final day to visit one of the islands or sights in Dobrovnik. Or choose one of the several recreational offerings on our island of Kolocep. Farewell dinner at the Villas.
- Mon 22 Flight home

### **TOUR INCLUDES**

- Small group with special interests
- Round-trip air fare from east coast
- Hotel accommodations for 12 nights with breakfast daily
- Welcome Dinner and Farewell Dinner
- Admissions and costs for activities listed
- English-speaking guides as appropriate
- Chartered buses and other transport
- Special arrangements for cave visits and karst studies
- Karst Institute in Postojna
- Visits to rural villages, farms, and castles
- Gifts for special people in Slovenia and Croatia
- Tips for guides and drivers
- Escorted personally by Dwight Deal and Mary Fletcher Deal

### **NOT INCLUDED**

- Transportation from home to east coast and return. Kim's World Travel will arrange connecting flights from home cities.
- Items of a personal nature and meals not included in the itinerary
- Travel insurance (highly recommended)

### **TOUR LEADERS**

Dwight is a hydrogeologist, karst researcher, and caver who has studied and explored caves and karst areas in North America and China. Mary, an experienced travel planner, has led numerous tours worldwide since 1982. Dwight and Mary traveled in Slovenia and Croatia in 2005 and visited most of the locations listed on this tour. Dwight has also established good personal relationships with several karst scientists in Postojna and Ljubljana who are assisting him in planning this trip.