



MAGICAL MONTENEGRO

MULTI-ACTIVITY CHALLENGE

SEA TO SUMMIT

When: 9-16 th June 2023

Group size: 12-14 people, open to women and men

Tour duration: 7 days/ 6 nights

Let's go!

Journey through beautiful landscapes and forgotten villages, along ancient pathways from the sea to the heart of the rivers, lakes and mountains of the Dinaric Alps in Montenegro.

The challenge of this trip focuses on Mount Orjen, the Dinaric Alps' highest coastal mountain massif. The mountain is relatively unknown and rarely visited by outsiders. A few communities remain working on the land in historic villages and tourism is acknowledged as the best and most sustainable way to preserve their traditions, heritage and communities for the future. Using a combination of paddle, peddle and foot power this journey will show you another side of this region and the higher Dinaric Alps in the north of Montenegro.

This tour is *Regenerative* through support for small community businesses along the way.

It is *Restorative* in leaving the modern world behind for the most part, areas are not on cell phone networks and it is an ideal chance to boost your emotional health, community, friendship and all of this is done in a *Rewilding* environment, where our guides can show through our policy of Leave of No Trace that our impacts on the environment are negative, that our impacts on local community are positive and that our interaction with the local environment seeks to protect and raise awareness of / tackle issues (i.e. trash or other adverse impacts) as we take our journey.

Day One: 9th June - Arrival Welcome to Montenegro!

All participants need to arrive in Tivat today.

If for any reason this is not possible, separate airport transfers need to be made to Rose

Upon arrival to Tivat airport we will transfer by boat to the historic fishing village of Rose on the Lustica Peninsula, at the entrance to the Bay of Kotor. Check in and settle into our comfortable, cabana style accommodation right by the sea and enjoy a welcome drink and dinner overlooking the Bay of Kotor and across to the highest mountain massif of the Dinaric coastal alps - Mount Orjen (1894m).

Today we will also meet our guide(s) for this trip and have a gear and logistics briefing as well as having the opportunity to ask any questions about the journey.

Meals Included: Dinner

Forte Rose

Forte Rose is located on the shore with beautiful views of Orjen mountain and the bay area. Offering outdoor dining with freshly caught fish and seafood as the specialty along with a range of Mediterranean and Bokelian dishes and wines, this is a relaxed and perfect place to dine on a hot summer's evening.

Accommodation: Twin share basis with ensuite bathrooms

Day Two 10th June - Paddle & Climb

We'll set out early this morning after a light breakfast and head down to the beach where our kayaks will be waiting for us.



The paddle across the bay to the 13th century town of Herceg Novi is beautiful, especially early in the morning. We will come ashore right by the town harbor and enjoy a coffee at a local cafe while we get changed and ready to move on. We take the stairs which lead up and through this charming historic town, leading past two fortresses and then on and up out of the town towards the mountain. The first hour is on stairways and local roads through the villages until we come to the Matkovic area where we start to follow the ancient paths used by goat herders and villagers for centuries.

We will take a pit stop at the village of Kameno for a lunch break at a local cafe to give us the chance to rest before heading further towards our overnight destination Za Vratlom mountain lodge at 1,060m above sea level.

Upon arrival at the mountain lodge, we will be warmly welcomed with local tea by the 'domar' (guardian) of the lodge.

Our journey today is really quite incredible - starting from the Mediterranean landscapes of the Bay and reaching up into the high Alpine zone - all within just a few hours.

Total distance today (hiking) - 12 kms / Total ascent 1,100m. Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Herceg Novi

Za Vratlom Mountain Lodge The mountain hut is very well equipped and has a water well and solar power, a large indoor and outdoor dining area, kitchen and refreshments available. Rooms are 4 persons sharing with shared bathrooms on the ground floor. The surrounding area is beautiful for relaxing, taking short hikes to viewpoints with your guide and for exploring the ancient beech forests and remains of former shepherd settlements. We settle in and enjoy dinner in the mountain hut and a good night's sleep.

Mount Orjen Mount Orjen (1894m) is the highest peak and mountain massif in the Dinaric coastal chain. The mountain is formed of Cretaceous limestone (karst) with abundant flora. The village of Crkvice on the mountain has some of the highest rainfall in Europe. The limestone has resulted in some fascinating and quite unique features including the Subra plateau, a large limestone pavement and amphitheatre and the 'ljuti krš' literally the 'angry waves' a sea of jagged rocks located just below Borići on the mountain's southern side.

The mountain is crisscrossed with hiking trails through forests and rocky landscapes. Many follow the old AustroHungarian roads built when this was the farthest border of the empire. The mountain has many stories including that of the ice men, who used to collect ice from some of the deeper caves on the mountain during the summer months and bring it down by donkey or horse to the town of Herceg Novi to the local hotels, before modern refrigeration was invented.

The local villages of Vrbanj and Žlijebci have local inns serving food and drink. The mountain has very little water due to its topography and for this reason was never heavily settled. The

upper parts of the mountain cannot be reached by vehicle making this a haven for hikers and trail runners.



Day Three 11th June - Hike Orjen Massif & Vrbanj Mountain Village Today we take a digital detox and a walk on the wild side!

We'll hike across the Orjen mountain on marked trails, learning about the fascinating and unique karstic landscape. There are no roads up here or much else except wild and beautiful landscapes. Forget cell phone connection or checking business mails or social media. This is where you leave the modern world behind and trek on ancient pathways, at one with nature.

We spend the night in the small village of Vrbanj in a family run guesthouse with simple but comfortable amenities and tasty mountain food.

Accommodation is twin or triple share with shared bathrooms. If the group is larger (more than 10 pax) accommodation will be split between two village guesthouses with dinner taken together at one. Luggage will be transported to the village and be ready and waiting upon your arrival here.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch (Trail lunch), Dinner

Day Four – 12th June – The only way is UP to the Summit! Veliki Kabao

We will wake up early this morning for the 3-hour hike to the summit of Orjen mountain. The trail mostly follows through the forest on the lower part and then onto the old Austro-Hungarian paths built by the 10,000 troops stationed on Orjen mountain when this region was the last outpost of the Austro-Hungarian empire. The highest point of the Orjen massif is Veliki Kabao which has a trekking path to the top, no technical skills needed! From here we will enjoy stunning views to Bosnia, Croatia and the northern mountains of Montenegro.

We will celebrate our sea to summit challenge and, after hiking back down on the easy paths back to Vrbanj, our feet can look forward to taking a rest!

After lunch our transfer vehicle(s) will be waiting for the next part of our journey. We head inland to the higher Dinaric Alps to the mountain town of Zabljak, one of the highest in the Balkans at 1400m alt.

We will spend a comfortable night in a mountain lodge hotel on twin share basis with ensuite bathrooms. Meals Included: Breakfast, Trail lunch, Dinner

Zabljak

Zabljak is one of the Balkan's highest settlements at 1400m alt. Originally established when people brought their livestock from the valleys to graze on the high plateaus, the town is now a popular destination offering skiing and snow sports in winter and hiking and active adventures in summer. The town is low level and spaced out giving an open feeling with stunning mountain and plateau vistas all around. Located at the gateway to Durmitor National Park, it welcomes visitors who come to enjoy the remoteness, the wildlife and the spectacular forest and mountain landscapes. The town's proximity to the Tara Canyon, Durmitor National Park and vast Sinjajevina plateau means it is a haven for adventure and nature lovers.

Day Five 13th June - Pedal Power!

Today we take a relaxed morning with an optional visit to the Black Lake (walkable from the town) or simply chill out on the cafe terrace of our hotel. We'll pack up and leave late morning to the outer edge of Durmitor National Park, just 15 mins drive from the hotel. Here our bikes and equipment will be waiting for us, and we'll take an exciting mountain bike ride through the very heart of Durmitor National Park. The track is almost all on asphalted roads so is rated easy and ebikes are available for those who prefer them over mountain bikes. We'll stop en route for lunch at a local village and then continue our ride down into the Tara canyon arriving late afternoon. Time to relax tonight, enjoy a camp cooked meal and settle into comfortable wooden cabins 😊

Rooms are triple or twin share with private bathrooms. Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Durmitor National Park

Durmitor National Park was established in 1952 and is UNESCO World Nature and Cultural Heritage site. The park covers 370 sq km and includes part of the Tara canyon within its boundaries.



The high plateau areas are still home in the summer months to a few families who practice transhumance, moving their livestock from Zabljak or lower villages to graze the grasslands higher up. A visit to their 'katun' - simple mountain houses - with no running water or electricity, is a peek into the past and a chance to sample delicious homemade cheeses such as kajmak or mountain teas, freshly picked and dried.

The Ring of Durmitor is a scenic bike ride or drive through the park's most spectacular areas including the view of the deepest part of the Tara Canyon, Mala Crna Gora, a village cut off in the winter months and the Susica canyon where the European brown bear still roams wild.

Tara Rafting Camp

Tonight, we enjoy an overnight at the beautiful, forested rafting camp on the shores of the Tara Canyon. The plan is to arrive before dinner and settle into our private lodge room with its own bathroom (family rooms available). A home cooked dinner and breakfast are included from the camp's excellent kitchen. The camp has a bar selling soft drinks, beer and ice creams, as well as lots of outside space and private chillout areas with hammocks, campfire pits, camping areas and a natural sandy beach right on the Tara River!

Day Six 14th June - Wet and Wild!

Tara Canyon Raft is one of Europe's deepest canyons on the spectacular Tara River in northern Montenegro!

Today we enjoy the adventure on Montenegro's lower Tara section, rafting from Brstanovica to Scepan Polje. The transfer from camp by jeep to the rafting start point is a 20 min drive. Once we reach the put-in point our guide will brief us on safety on the river and in the raft. The total time spent on the river is around 2 and a half hours (depending on the season and river flow) and this includes a stop to swim in the waterfalls (depending



on river conditions, this might not always be possible). At the end of the river descent jeeps will wait to bring us back to camp (20 mins drive) to change into your dry clothes and enjoy a traditional, home cooked lunch.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch (dinner is independent tonight)

Transfer to the Coast

After enjoying a late lunch at the rafting camp, we transfer back to the Bay of Kotor via the spectacular Piva Lake region. We will be staying at an historic boutique hotel for the final two nights, with a free evening to enjoy the hotel spa, explore the historic old town of Herceg Novi or chill out at one of the many restaurants on the waterfront.

Historic Hotel Meljine, Herceg Novi

This beautiful 18th century historical building located on the shores of the Bay of Kotor has been tastefully restored and is now a spacious boutique hotel and spa with hotel residences adjoining. With direct access to the waterfront and marina and views across the Bay, this is the perfect place to spend time and unwind. The spa offers a large pool, 3 types of saunas, hammam, steam room, aroma showers, salt room and jacuzzi along with a full range of spa treatments. Two restaurants on site provide delicious fusion cuisine based on locally sourced food and wines as well as a wine bar on site. The hotel has a private beach, beach bar and two outdoor dining areas. The main hotel building offers a Family suite options as well as a King suite and double rooms with a minimum 25 sq m each. The residences are available as doubles with sea or mountain view, or as studios with a kitchen. From the private harbor it's possible to take a boat trip on the Bay of Kotor or enjoy other activities

that can be organised from here to include hiking, watersports and more. The hotel adjoins a waterfront promenade adjacent to the resort town of Herceg Novi and a 20-minute walk or 5 min taxi ride will bring you to the harbor or historic Old City.

Day Seven -16th June - Relax & Recover 😊

Today is a relaxing day and we start with a private boat trip to explore the bay. The boat will motor over to historic Kotor and Perast in the morning, with time ashore to explore these fascinating and historical locations. On the way back you'll stop for swimming before arriving back at your hotel late afternoon. In the evening we'll gather together for dinner at an excellent local seafood restaurant to celebrate our achievements over the past week.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Dinner (lunch is independent in Kotor or Perast with plenty of options as well as snacks provided on the boat)

Day Eight 17th June - It's time to head home! Breakfast, check out and airport transfer!
Distances from your Herceg Novi hotel base: - 50 mins to Tivat airport

- 2.5 hours to Podgorica airport - 1.5 hours to Dubrovnik airport

Accommodation on this tour as currently set up is mixed with some hotel stays where single and twin share rooms are available and other more basic accommodation where bathrooms are shared, or dorm style rooms are the only option. These are indicated in the itinerary.

Ask about single supplements if needed - single rooms will only be available on Day 1 (depending on group size as accommodation capacity is limited), Day 4 (Zabljak) and Day 6 and 7 (Herceg Novi).

Montenegro and Food

On the coast Montenegro's cuisine is Mediterranean in style with a lot of fresh fish, seafood, salads and homemade olive oil. There is a strong dose of Italy when it comes to excellent coffee, pizza and gelato! In the interior mountains the food is heavier, more meat and cheese based and throughout there are also the flavors of the Ottoman empire - Turkish influences abound. Clients have travelled here successfully for many years with a wide range of dietary requirements from vegetarian, vegan, light to severe allergies or food intolerances and it's possible to cater for all of these.

This trip includes all meals except one dinner on Day 6 and one lunch on Day 7.

Trip investment: Dhs 8,600 per person / \$2305 based on twin sharing 25 % deposit payable on booking; balance payment due 1st May 2022. **Investment Includes**
All activities and equipment as per the itinerary 😊

Local guides and Julie as group leader

All meals except dinner on day six and lunch on day seven

Group arrival airport transfer by boat and one group airport transfer departure by van based on departure from Tivat airport. Based on everyone arriving and leaving at the same time!

Branded Team fleece & kit bag A great experience with a like-minded group! The best of Montenegro!

Excludes

Flights

Travel Insurance

Visa (if required)

Personal expenses (laundry, drinks etc)

Getting to Montenegro

There are three international airports serving Montenegro –

Podgorica, Tivat (Bay of Kotor) and Dubrovnik (Croatia, 25 mins drive from Montenegro border).

The preferred arrival airport for the group is Tivat as it is possible to take a boat from the airport to Forte Rose!

If it's not possible for you to arrive at Tivat then airport transfers can be arrange

Once we have a group together, we can finalize any additional airport transfers where necessary

NEXT STEPS

1. Arrange a call / zoom / skype with Julie if it's your first trip with Mountain High

Request and complete the booking form, make a 25 % deposit and send along a copy of the passport you will be travelling on. The balance of the trip fees is payable by the 1st of May 2023

2. Start getting fit !
3. Book your flights and arrange travel insurance to include cancel for any reason cover

Please send all correspondence to

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