

First week | 4th day

Crossing the Karst

Gorizia - Nova Gorica - Komen - Lipica

Discovering the Slovenian Karst: pleasant up and downhill ride, rich landscapes, perfumes and tastes of the Mediterranean



ROUTE INFORMATION

Starting point: Gorizia – Nova Gorica

Arrival: Lipica

Length: 77 km

Conditions: mainly on asphalted roads with mixed traffic and cycling lane from Vrtojba to Miren. Some uphill. Be careful of the wind.

Indications: absent

Inter-modality: train + bike

USEFUL ADDRESSES

Tourist Office Nova Gorica, Delpinova ulica 18b, 5000 Nova Gorica, tel. +386 05 3304600 tzticng@siol.net, www.novagorica-turizem.com

Tourist Office Šempeter-Vrtojba

Trg Ivana Roba 4, 5290 Šempeter pri Gorici
tel. +386 05 3936117, www.gea-sp.si

Tourist Office Štanjel, Štanjel 1a, 6222 Štanjel
tel. +386 07 690056, tic.stanjel@komen.si

Tourist Office Dutovlje, Bunčetova domačija
6221 Dutovlje, tel. +386 05 7641549,
tic.dutovlje@gmail.com

Hostel Pliskovica, Pliskovica 11, 6221 Dutovlje
tel. +386 05 7640250; info@hostelkras.com
www.hostelkras.com

Tourist Office Sežana, Partizanska ulica 63 6210
Sežana, tel. +386 05 7310128

tic.sezana@siol.net, www.vinskacestakras.si

Tourist Office Equile di Lipica

Lipica 5, 6210 Sežana, tel. +386 05 7391580
info@lipica.org, www.lipica.org

Railway stations: Gorizia, Nova Gorica, Šempeter pri Gorici, Štanjel, Dutovlje, Sežana

We will get to know the **Slovenian Karst** better through this stage, it is a territory with particular characteristics from a historical, nature, cultural and gastronomic point of view.

The route meanders – with frequent up and downhills, although not steep – in the spectacular limestone highlands which dominate the **Gulf of Trieste**, giving continuous emotions. You mainly pedal along narrow roads, open to traffic but not at all busy, surrounded by dry stone walls which seem to lead towards nowhere. Nature rules here, modelled by the Bora wind and enriched by unique colours, which especially in Autumn present us with glimpses of great vitality.

Then all of a sudden, an old village appears, the remains of a medieval castle, a bell tower and we return to civilization. Then after a bend in the road, the extensive view of the Gulf of Trieste explodes in front of us, dominated from above.

Starting from **Nova Gorica** the trip continuously comes close to the Italian border, passing through villages which have a double name, as they were once Italian, and Austrian before that, until we reach **Lipica** and its centuries-old horse stud farm.



1 Štanjel, castle with surrounding walls

2 Dutovlje, wine making centre

3 Šempeter pri Gorici, Coronini Palace

4 Lipica, horses grazing

TRAVELLERS' DIARY

We leave from Nova Gorica along the Vipava Valley to reach Šempeter (St. Peter), where there is the fifteenth century church of St. Peter, the Coronini Counts' castle and Villa Maffei. Then there is a nice cycling lane which reaches Miren, dominated by the wonderful sanctuary of Saint Grado in Merna, dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows. Among gentle hills and some gravel roads, you reach Lokvica, then Sela na Krasu, from where there is a spectacular view of the Gulf of Trieste. At Škrbina you can visit the painter Lojze Spacal's house, then you pass through the beautiful village of Sveto with its church dedicated to Saint Egidio, one of the leading exam-

ples of sacred architecture in Slovenia. Then we reach Komen, which was an important administrative centre in the western Karst region, afterwards we continue into the heart of the Karst until we pass through the villages of Pliskovica and Dutovlje, a famous wine making centre specialised in the production of Teran, the local nectar. You can also reach Dutovlje, passing through the medieval town of Štanjel which with its castle and surrounding walls represents the most attractive tourist spot in the Karst. Then you reach Toma, a village where you can visit Srečko Kosovel's birthplace house, he was one of the most important Slove-

nian poets. Pedalling along enchanted roads you reach Sežana, the main economic centre of the Karst, which hosts a botanical orchard which is over a hundred years old.

Finally we arrive at our goal for today's trip, the famous Lipica, known all over the world as the place where horses from the famous Hapsburg stud farm have been bred since the XVI century, giving origin to the Lipizzaner horses. Here everything centres around the horse stables: courses, exhibitions, horseback excursions, carriage rides, visits to the historical stables.