



Trip Factsheet: Montenegro Ski Tour

Discover one of Europe's true wildernesses in Montenegro. Over 90% of this small Balkan country is mountainous terrain and it is an ideal destination for an "off the beaten track" ski touring adventure. The scenery is simply breathtaking and although the mountains aren't high by Alpine standards, there's plenty of great terrain to enjoy. This is as far from the glitz and glamour of the Alps as you can find.

About Montenegro

Montenegro ('Black Mountain') is a sovereign state in south-eastern Europe. Formerly part of Yugoslavia. It has borders with Croatia, Serbia, Albania and Bosnia. It has a coastline on the Adriatic. The mountains of Montenegro are home to some of Europe's most rugged terrain and average more than 2,000m in elevation. Montenegro is not (yet) a member of the European Union but it has adopted the Euro as the local currency.

Travel

The starting point for this trip is Podgorica, the capital of Montenegro. The only direct flight from the UK is with Ryanair from Stansted. They fly twice a week on Thursdays and Sundays.

Indirect flights are available from other UK airports including Austrian Airways from Heathrow via Vienna.

All local travel in Montenegro is included in the cost of the trip.

Rendezvous in Podgorica

Our guide would normally aim to meet everyone at the airport and drive them to the first hotel in Kolasin.

Accommodation

All nights are spent in comfortable hotels (twin share) on half-board basis. We usually spend 5 nights in the Hotel Brille in Kolasin followed by 2 nights in the Hotel Zabijlak in the village of the same name.

Your Guide

Your guide will be Klemen Gricar. Klemen is a Slovenian IFMGA Mountain Guide who has worked with us for many years. He did a reconnaissance trip to Bosnia and Montenegro a few years ago and has the advantage of speaking the local language. The maximum ratio for this tour is 6 skiers with 1 guide and the tours often run with up to 12 skiers and 2 guides.

Planned Itinerary

Day 1

Travel day - Fly to Podgorica, the capital of Montenegro. Transfer by road to the Kolasin. The distance is 75kms and transfer time is about 1½ hours. Check into the Boutique Hotel www.brile.co

Day 2

The drive from the hotel to the ski fields will take about 15 minutes. We start with some warm-up runs on the pistes of Kolasin 1450 resort where there is some good tree skiing and 'slackcountry'.

Short hikes also give access to some couloirs from the Bjelasica ridge. We return to the Hotel Brile after skiing

Day 3

We start the day by heading back to the Kolasin ski resort and ride the lift system to the top of the ski area. From here we skin up to the summit of Mt Bjelasica and enjoy an excellent ski down the south side into the Jelovica valley. We skin back up about 400 and ski back down to the ski resort and to our hotel.

Day 4

Today's goal is Jablanov Vrh peak in the Sinjavina mountains. We start with a 30 minute (16km) drive up to Gornje Lipovo valley from where we have an 850m (3 hour) skin up a trail that follows the road to the mountain pass at Vratlo and onwards to the peak. We can ski to the summit and from there we enjoy a ski down wide open terrain back to the car park. We return to our hotel in Kolasin.

Day 5

We're heading back into the Sinjavina mountains for a second full day ski tour that takes us up to the Lucka Gora saddle and onto the ridge line to the summit at 2,100m. A number of routes of descent are available to ski back down to the road. We return for our last night in the Hotel Brile as tomorrow we're heading to a new hotel in Zabljak village.

Day 6

The transfer to Zabljak village takes about 1½ hours and on our arrival we check into the Hotel Zabljak before heading out to ski. From the hotel it's a 5 minute drive to the ski resort and we ride the lifts to the top of the ski area at 2,010m. We make a sort traverse to the summit of the 2,322m high Savin Kuk. The wide, south-facing face gives amazing panoramic views of the lake plateau and across the principal mountain range of Montenegro. The descent back into the ski area is about 900m vertical and we can repeat this circuit a few times. In the evening we enjoy the renowned Zabljak apres-ski! Hotel website: www.hmdurmitor.com/en/hotel

Day 7

Sljeme Ridge – Montenegro's longest ski run!

We start the day with another short (5 minute) transfer by road to the trailhead for the long ascent to one of Durmitor's highest summits, Sljeme (2,455m). From the summit there are various possibilities to descend the south-facing slope with over 1,000m vertical drop. We return to Zabljak for our last night

Day 8

Travel day - departure after breakfast for the transfer back to Podgorica airport. The distance is about 120kms and journey time 2 hours 30 minutes.

Preparation for Ski Touring

It is essential that you prepare yourself well in advance by taking regular aerobic exercise so you arrive on the trip as fit as you can. Ski touring and off piste skiing are physically demanding and with the big ascents, varied snow conditions and the rucksack you need to carry on this tour, you'll soon be found out if you're not in tip-top condition!

Doing sports that increase your aerobic fitness and leg strength are key. So when preparing for this trip nothing beats activities that increase your heart rate and build your aerobic levels e.g. running, cycling and swimming.

Movement skills - agility, balance, flexibility - which allow you to turn your skis and adjust to uneven terrain - are also very relevant. If time permits try to include some yoga or pilates into your training schedule.

Frames of reference:

- If you are a long distance runner (marathon or half marathon) or similar endurance sport and you're training or competing within 4 -5 months of doing this trip, then you can stop reading now, just keep up the good work!
- If you have run a few 10ks or do sprint/Olympic distance triathlons or compete or train for other similar sporting events then you will be fine too but focus on some long slow walking or running to build your endurance levels a little.
- If you have done very little apart from the occasional 30 minute jog, short cycle ride (mountain bike or road) or you occasionally go to the gym after work – then you have some work to do but fear not you can attain the fitness levels you need but you do need to increase the amount of exercise you do each week and do this well in advance of your trip (ideally 3-4 months out).

For any ski touring trip you will be doing exercise that requires you to operate for long periods of time at a relatively low intensity. You will be carrying a rucksack which will mean you have to adapt your skiing but it's a lot easier if you have strong core muscles (stomach and back).

It's best to get prepared in plenty of time, not by trying to pack in as much training in the last 2-3 weeks as it takes about this length of time for the body to adapt to an increase in exercise. Don't think that you will get fit during the programme you won't and don't think that simply going to the gym to run on the treadmill for 40mins twice a week will be enough – it won't!

In the last 2 weeks you can decrease the amount and intensity of the exercise you do; so you arrive fresh and ready for the challenge.

Good fitness will make your trip overall much more enjoyable and you will get more out of it! For more information contact us and we'll send you our 12 week training guide.

Snow Conditions and Climate

Ski touring in the high mountains is very dependent on the weather and snow conditions. You are likely to encounter lots of different snow types during the trip, everything from fresh powder to crusty, wind-blown snow. Often when the weather is poor (heavy snow, high winds and high avalanche risk) the tour can be delayed or the route changed and you need to accept this as part of being in the mountains and trust your guide to do the best he or she can with the conditions at the time.

During the ski touring season, typically the mornings will be cold and in fine weather the days can be hot. Sometimes the temperature change can be in the region of 20°C through the course of the day, so it's essential that you have a good clothing layering system.

What's included in the price of your holiday?

All accommodation

All breakfasts and dinners

All guide fees and expenses

All transportation from rendezvous to drop-off

Scheduled expenses

Travel to Montenegro

Lunches and drinks

Uplift costs

Spending Money

You should bring an allowance for lunches and drinks. We suggest around 150 – 200 Euros will be sufficient to cover all personal expenses. There are cash point facilities in all major towns and villages.

Equipment and Kit Hire

A copy of our recommended ski kit list can be found on our website or you can call or email us and we will send you a copy.

Essential items you need to have:

- Skis with ski touring bindings (Diamir Fritschi or similar)
- Skins that are cut to fit your skis and couteaux (crampons for your skis)

NOTE *You cannot hire skins or couteaux on their own! If you are bringing your own skis you must purchase skins that are cut to fit and couteaux that work with your bindings.*

- Ski touring boots
- Ski poles
- Boot crampons
- Ice axe
- Harness with karabiner, sling and prussic loop
- 35 – 40 litre rucksack with straps on the side for carrying your skis
- Avalanche transceiver, shovel and probe.

You will also need to ski with the 3 items of safety equipment, avalanche transceiver, shovel and probe, if you do not have your own equipment. Your guide can rent these to you for a cost of 65€ for the 3 items for the 6 days. Please let us know in advance if you need to rent these items.

Food

We suggest you bring with you or buy in resort snack food that you can take out on the hill with you each day. Things like cereal bars, dried fruit and nuts, chocolate, sugary sweets or your favourite hill snacks. When you're staying overnight in huts it's best to take supplies for the days you are away. Huts do sell food but it's expensive and sometimes stocks run low.

If you have any food allergies or dietary requirements especially if you are a Coeliac (Gluten free) or have a dairy allergy we recommend you bring some food with you so you can supplement your dinners.

You will also generally stop for short breaks each hour where you should eat something each time so you maintain your energy levels throughout the day.

Insurance

You need to have personal insurance that covers you for off piste skiing and the cover must include helicopter rescue.

For UK & European residents we recommend the Ski Club's insurance. For more details and to purchase a policy online visit <http://www.skiclubinsurance.co.uk/> If you need assistance with arranging insurance please let us know.

You should bring a copy of your insurance certificate with you to the Alps.

For EU residents we recommend that you also obtain the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) prior to travel and take this with you in addition to your personal insurance.

See <https://www.gov.uk/european-health-insurance-card>

What happens next?

We will contact you 8 weeks before your arrival date to request the final balance payment.

Around 2-3 weeks before your arrival date we will email you final joining instructions with relevant contact details for your guide(s), hotels, etc.

More information

If you have any questions or need further details don't hesitate to contact us:

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