







#### HIKER NATURE'S PARADISE

Don't underestimate the tiny and peaceful country of Slovenia. Sitting snug in the heart of Europe between Italy, Austria, Croatia and Hungary, it delivers a diverse offering that is sure to exceed the expectations of any visitor. The influence of its neighbours is evident in the food, culture and architecture, and makes it a truly special destination.

Hiking is big in Slovenia, and its hiking trails meander through a fairy-tale land of natural beauty. From the spectacular snow-capped peaks of the Julian Alps and gobsmackingly beautiful emerald rivers and lakes, to rolling vineyards and coastal paths along the Adriatic Sea, Slovenia is a true hikers' paradise.

We have selected the best sections of the Alpe-Adria and Juliana Trails, and combined them with some lovely cross-country paths to showcase Slovenia. Traverse trails surrounded by stunning limestone peaks, discover remnants of WWI military positions, hear traditional stories from local beekeepers, and take in majestic views of pristine wilderness. Hike up to delightfully rustic mountain lodges, where you'll receive a warm welcome and home-cooked meal from your hosts. Or choose a trail that meanders around vineyards and orchards, through medieval hilltop villages and sample air-dried finely shaved ham with a good glass of local vino, before heading to the Venetian-style seaside

port of Piran. Whichever path you take, you'll discover why Slovenia has a reputation as a real foodie destination.

The experience doesn't stop after you leave the trail—immerse yourself in the lively cafe and music culture in Ljubljana and seek out a reviving experience at one of one of many wellness spas in the region.

So grab your hiking boots as we invite you to discover an unspoilt wonderland of astounding scenery that will leave you with no doubt that this is truly a superb hiking destination.

We'd love to help you plan your journey. It's what we do best!



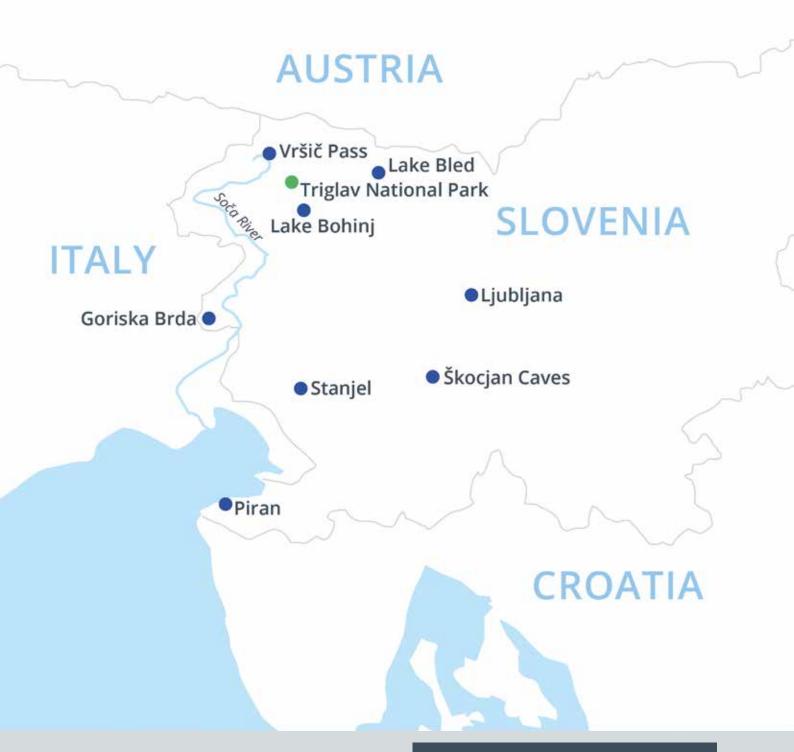


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#### Disclaimer

The information in this Destination Guide has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However, it is subject to change and does not form part of the contract between the client and RAW Travel.

#### **Contact Us**

#### RAW Travel Office

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## HIKING IN SLOVENIA – QUICK LOOK

Hike through some of nature's most magical landscapes; postcard-perfect lakes, turquoise rivers, lush forests, rolling vineyards and pretty Alpine meadows that don't pose altitude issues. Explore UNESCO-listed cave systems, whimsical castles and charming towns. Savour fresh produce from the farm and sea.

- Starting point: Ljubljana
- · Best time to go: April to October
- **Difficulty**: Vineyards, Karst & Coast is moderate to challenging (4-6) and Highlights and Julian Alps & Coast are challenging to strenuous (6-7)\*
- **Duration**: 7, 8 and 10 day itineraries
- · Total distance: 88/98/152km
- Daily distances: 13-26km
- · High point: 1900m
- **Highlights**: Slovenian cuisine, caves, lakes and towns

\*All our trips are graded from 1 (introductory) to 10 (tough). Grading systems are always arbitrary. However, having an indication of the grade may help you choose between our walks. See 
Trip Gradings for more information.









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## **SECTION 1: INSPIRATION**

#### WHY YOU'LL LOVE WALKING IN SLOVENIA

- ✓ Scenery: Be enchanted by scenes out of fairy-tale stories. Imagine emerald-blue lakes edged by lush forest overlooked by a medieval castle and snow-dusted peaks (without altitude issues!)—that's Slovenia.
- ✓ Cuisine: Slovenes have a strong focus on using organic, locally-grown produce and blend cooking styles of their neighbouring countries to create familiar yet unique dishes.
- ✓ Historic town: Wind back the clock of time in villages and towns seemingly unchanged

- in their appearance since the Middle Ages, Roman times or the communist era.
- ✓ WWI history: Learn about the hardship endured by Russian POWs, and the mighty battles and struggles between Austro-Hungarian and Italian soldiers during WWI as you explore open-air museums and walk through old military zones.
- ✓ Reflection and self-discovery: Live more mindfully and enjoy the simple rituals of daily walking. Adopt the enviable lifestyle of the Slovenes.

#### **ROUTE DESCRIPTION**

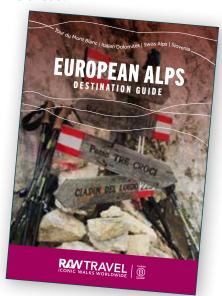
Hiking is a favourite pastime for Slovenes and the more popular trails are frequented by other hikers, but you will find yourself enjoying the solitude of some lesser known trails offering the chance for some peaceful meditative walking. Generally the routes are well signed but there will be times you need to pay attention to your map and walk notes.

## **Heading into the Alps** trip grading 6–7 (Challenging to Strenuous)

Our Alps itineraries offer spectacular Alpine and mountain scenery without having to hike at altitude. The Julian Alps is where much of our hiking route is focused. Choose from an 8-day guided or 10-day self-guided itinerary. Both start in the delightful city of Ljubljana before heading into the heart of the Julian Alps to hike some of the highlights of the Alpe-Adria Trail, a multi-country 750km-long trail. You will walk past turquoise-coloured lakes and rivers, through lush valleys and Alpine meadows, tranquil forests, and up striking mountain peaks. The self-guided itinerary offers further exploration of the Juliana Trail, finishing at the iconic Lake Bled, while the guided itinerary makes its way through the wine region to the Adriatic Coast and the romantic seaside town of Piran.

Our itineraries that traverse the Julian Alps are challenging and while there are some easy flat or gently undulating sections, there are many demanding sections with strenuous, steep hills. If you are uncomfortable with heights or paths that run close to the edge, please chat with our Destination Experts to find the right itinerary for you. Please also note that there are some long steep descents that can be hard on knees.

See our European Alps Destination Guide [link] for more information on hiking in Alpine areas.



**Vineyards and the Coast** trip grading 4–5 (Moderate to Challenging)

If you are seeking a less challenging option than our Alps itineraries, our 7-day Vineyards, Karst and Coast route takes you from Ljubljana through wine country and the Karst Plateau, towards the Adriatic Coast. This itinerary kicks off with a steep hike up Mount Nanos for spectacular views over the Vipava Valley, but the following days are less strenuous with undulating terrain rather than steep ascents and descents. You will visit the impressive Škocjan Cave system before arriving in the alluring coastal town of Piran. Here, be charmed by the red-roofed Venetian-style architecture that overlooks the sparkling Adriatic Sea.

#### **ABOUT THE TRAILS**

We have combined some of Slovenia's best hiking trails to create three unique itineraries. Some of these trails are stand-alone day hikes through the Vipava Valley and Karst Plateau, but others include sections of the following long-distance hikes:

Alpe-Adria Trail: a 750km long, multi-country hiking trail that starts at the foot of the Grossglockner, Austria's highest mountain, travels through Slovenia and ends near Trieste in Italy, on the Adriatic Coast. It was created in partnership between several organisations from each of the three countries with the desire to design a route that showcased incredible and diverse scenery, culture and cuisine. We focus on the best of the Slovenian sections, travelling from the heart of the Julian Alps, through the photogenic Soča Valley to the beautiful wine region that borders Italy.

Juliana Trail: a 270km circuit route that winds its way through the valleys and meadows of the Julian Alps beneath the majestic alpine peaks a world above. The trail was designed for people to enjoy walking through the stunning region without having to hike at the more challenging elevations. On our itineraries, we avoid the road sections of this walk and select the most picturesque trails that pass through tranquil forests, flower-filled meadows, idyllic lakeside towns and along crystal-clear rivers.

#### FLORA AND FAUNA

Keep an eye out for the many varieties of orchids in Slovenia in spring, or during the summer in the mountains. Spring brings hellebores, snowdrops and primrose out as well. The forests of Slovenia are made up of beech, spruce, larch, and dwarf pine, and you can find stands of thermophilous hop hornbeam and dwarf ash growing in the Julian Alps.

The karst region is home to the Lipizzaner, a Slovenian indiginous breed of horse, which has the unique trait of foals being born black and turning white as they grow. The caves in this area are home to the amphibius human fish (proteus). Soča trout live in the fresh water of the Soča River.

If you're hiking in the Alps, look out for Alpine Ibex, which were almost extinct in Slovenia but are now growing in numbers. Similarly, brown bear populations are increasing, but most live in the Kocevje old-growth forest, where we do not have itineraries. Slovenia has been labelled the "heart and soul of beekeeping" in Europe, with some 10,000 bee keepers. The Carniolan honey bee breed originates in Slovenia.





## WHY EXPERIENCE SLOVENIA WITH RAW TRAVEL?

RAW Travel has operated active walking trips since 2002, so we are one of the most experienced operators you can choose. We enjoy providing a friendly, personal service where you're treated as an individual. We pride ourselves on our staff's knowledge of Slovenia and have created walks that show you the best of the area.

When you book a trip with us you will deal with people who can answer your many questions about travelling there. As well as speaking to someone in the same time zone as you, you have the opportunity to meet with us and attend related events.

We provide detailed information and track notes for your walk that will help your trip go smoothly. You are dealing with a reputable and experienced Australian operator that has the best contacts in Slovenia.

#### WHY PEOPLE CHOOSE US

When you book a trip with us you'll enjoy:

- expert first-hand knowledge of hiking in Alpine regions
- insider information and tips from our Slovenia Destination Specialists
- access to 24-hour emergency assistance in Slovenia and Australia
- · delicious food
- luggage transfers—all you carry is your daypack
- pre-booked character-filled accommodation in traditional guesthouses, mountain huts, and small hotels
- booking of flights and pre/post-travel arrangements by our in-house travel agent
- luggage tags, detailed itinerary, maps, track notes (self-guided trips) and orientation pack



## **SECTION 1: INSPIRATION**

#### IS THIS THE RIGHT TRIP FOR ME?

When considering booking a trip it is important that you look at the descriptions in this Destination Guide about accommodation, food and level of physical difficulty to ensure that the trip matches your expectations. Particularly with the physical difficulty rating, it's vital to select a trip that is realistic for your ability. Read through this Destination Guide and the specific trip itineraries on our website before booking.

Our Slovenia walking itineraries are best suited to active and fit hikers who are capable of managing multiple steep ascents and descents. Hikers should be sure-footed and have a good sense of balance. You should be comfortable reading a map and interpreting route notes.



#### **Physical grading**

We use several criteria to assess the difficulty of our walks, including the number of hours walking required each day, terrain and conditions underfoot, weather, gradient, altitude, signage and facilities along the trail.

We have graded our hikes in Slovenia as 4–5 (Moderate to Challenging) and 6–7 (Challenging to Strenuous).

To prepare for walks of this grading, we recommend completing 2 to 3 walks per week (15km+), increasing distances while carrying an 8kg pack. Regular hill and stair walking is also recommended.

Our gradings are intended as a guide and will depend on your individual experience, fitness level and mental attitude.

#### Plan and prepare

Any long-distance walk deserves respect, time and planning on how to best undertake it. You should prepare for this walk with regular training before you go, to let your body adjust to walking comparable distances, day in day out. Average daily walk distances will vary depending on the itinerary you choose, however on average, most days you will walk between 15km and 25km (5 to 7 hours). However there are a few days walking up to 9 hours so please prepare and train accordingly.

While we often see amazing improvements in people's fitness with a program of regular training before a trip, you have to be realistic about whether you can commit to regular training with your current lifestyle. If you feel you are unable to commit to doing the training needed to achieve the level of fitness required then you should consider another trip that is less demanding. This is the only way to accurately judge whether you can cope with the demands of any given trip.

Practise hiking in an environment with the same equipment that you will take on your Slovenia hike. Your training should prepare you to walk several hours a day with ascents

and descents. It is important to train on terrain that is similar to that which you will encounter on your chosen route. See also Getting Fit for this Walk (pXX).

Read more: How to prepare your mind and body for a long-distance walk

#### WHAT'S IT LIKE UNDERFOOT?

Underfoot you will experience a variety of terrain including paving, cobblestones, rough gravel, and grassy and dirt paths. When crossing the Vršič mountain pass in the Alps, some sections require care to navigate loose rocks and narrow, single-track trails. The long descent to the Soča Valley is on steep terrain with loose rocks and tree roots. Hiking poles are highly recommended. Poles are good for balance and taking weight off your knees on descents and helping you get up the steep hill inclines. Mud can be a problem after rain on some parts of the trail and so good hiking boots are necessary. Hikers should be sure-footed and have a good sense of balance.

Two of our itineraries includes a visit to Škocjan Caves, and while it is a large cave and there is no crawling involved, the first section could be a bit unpleasant for anyone suffering claustrophobia until it opens up into a larger space. Please chat to your Destination Expert if you are at all concerned about this part of the tour. The tour lasts for about 2 hours and is on a paved pathway.

#### **SELF-GUIDED WALKING**

Travelling self-guided allows you to walk from place to place, progressing from one accommodation to the next in your own time. You walk without a guide, following our trail notes and area maps.

Luggage transfers are included on all trekking days, meaning you will only trek with a daypack.

The great part about self-guided travel is that you can choose your own travel dates (subject to accommodation availability) as well as your travel companions. Bring along a group of family or friends to enjoy your self-guided adventure with, too.

The routes in Slovenia are generally well signed so you won't need advanced orienteering skills but you should be comfortable reading a map, referring to route notes and independently navigating your way along a trail.

Remember, route finding, losing your way, finding it again and asking the locals for help is all part of the adventure.

#### **RAW TRAVEL INSIGHTS**

Written by our experienced hiking team, RAW Travel Insights are great background reading.

- Gastronomic Slovenia
- Fuelling your body for hiking
- How to layer clothes





#### **BOOKS TO READ BEFORE YOU GO**



Slovenia by Lonely Planet

From festivals to food, this comprehensive guide provides information on where to stay,

play and shop and how to get around this stunning destination when you are not on your RAW Travel itinerary.



Forbidden Bread by Erica Johnson Debeljak

An unusual love story that offers an insight into Slovenia's history. The storyline follows the author

who migrates to Slovenia from New York City during the Ten-Day War, and struggles to adapt to local life as Slovenia undergoes the transformation from a communist to a capitalist society.



The Lion the Witch & the Wardrobe by C.S. Lewis

The Chronicles of Narnia novels were hugely popular and

adapted to television, radio, the stage and film. Although aimed at children, they were equally popular with adults. Some scenes in the Narnia films were set in the Soča Valley in Slovenia. In the first book in the series, four adventurous siblings step through a magical wardrobe and into the land of Narnia, a land frozen in eternal winter and enslaved by the power of the White Witch. But when almost all hope is lost, the return of the great lion, Aslan, signals a great change and a great sacrifice.



Slovenia 1945: Memories of Death and Survival after WWII by John Corsellis & Marcus Ferrar

A detailed account of wartime cruelty and bravery and the

revival of battered communities in refugee camps after WWII. The authors demonstrate unsurpassed knowledge and depth of research of the Slovene migrant communities around the world to tell their stories.



Slovenia - Culture Smart!: The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture by Jason Blake

This book is ideal for those who seek a more meaningful time abroad through a better understanding of the local culture, customs and historical traditions.

#### **RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL**

The popularity of walking in nature does often put enormous pressure on the natural

environment. You can help preserve the fragile ecology by making an effort to use toilets in huts and refuges, and by making an effort to pick up rubbish left by others.

Responsible travel means more than staying safe and respecting the local cultures and customs in the countries you are visiting. You are responsible for making this trip the best it can be—read all your notes we send you, do the right pre-trip training, read our Insights, buy the right gear, wear in your boots, practice walking with poles. The more prepared you are, the more you will enjoy trekking in Slovenia.

See page 40 in Section 4 for information on our B Corporation commitment.

#### **EXTENDING YOUR TRIP**

Double your holiday experience by including a stopover on your journey! A city break is a great way to explore another place, indulge in some extra shopping, dining or sightseeing and is a great way to break up a long flight. Our fabulous RAW Travel city breaks can be designed to your requirements and usually include an arrival transfer, 2 nights accommodation and a city sightseeing tour. The exquisite Italian cities of Florence, Venice and Rome are ideal for a city break before or after your trek in Slovenia, and from the romantic setting of the Seine to the iconic sight of the Eiffel Tower dominating the skyline, there's nothing quite like the magic of Paris.



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## **SECTION 2: TRAVEL ESSENTIALS**

#### WHEN TO WALK

Slovenia's climate can be described as a typical Continental European climate with warm to hot summers and mild to cold winters. Snowy Alps and sunny Mediterranean coastline makes it a popular year round destination. However, the best time for hiking is from April to mid October, with prime months being May, June and September.

**Spring (April – May)** is a great time to visit Slovenia if you really want to avoid the crowds. The water is not yet warm enough to swim in, but pretty spring flowers are starting to colour the green meadows. Weather can be somewhat unpredictable in early spring but by May, temperatures are mild and perfect for hiking adventures.

Summer (June – August) offers longer daylight hours and mostly sunny skies with occasional summer thunderstorms. Temperatures can be warm to hot but cooler in the northern alpine region. A popular time to travel, you will experience vibrant and atmospheric towns radiating a party atmosphere. June is a particularly good time to travel with temperatures ideal for swimming and for hiking with fewer crowds in the towns.

Autumn (September – October) is another excellent time for hiking. Conditions are typically dry and sunny and the water is still warm enough to swim in during September. Although daylight hours are starting to reduce, and temperatures are cooling down, the vibrant reds, burnt orange and yellow of the autumn foliage makes for very pretty walking. It is also an ideal time to experience the vineyard regions during their harvest.

#### **GETTING FIT FOR THIS WALK**

Walking is one of the most natural things to do, so you may feel that you are already in good enough shape. However, you will be walking for many hours over successive days carrying a daypack, which is likely very different to your current walking schedule. We recommend that you undertake a training program according to your level of fitness for at least three months leading up to your departure. Regular exercise prior to the trip will allow you to build your fitness steadily so that you will enjoy and complete the trip with a smile and energy left over.

Moderate activities such as walking pose little health risk but before starting any new exercise program, we recommend that you see your doctor for a check-up, particularly if you have a medical condition, are aged over 40 years, are overweight or haven't exercised in a long time.

· Find out more:

Getting Walking Fit for the European Alps: How to prepare for your multi-day trek



See also 'Is this the right trip for me?' on p14.

#### **ACCOMMODATION STYLE**

We have carefully chosen a selection of accommodation that showcases the warm Slovenian hospitality. While some of our unique accommodation is not rated, the general standard of accommodation on these itineraries is around 3-3.5 stars. All accommodation, with the exception of the mountain hut stay, are en-suite.

On some of the itineraries you will stay in a traditional mountain hut. These huts are in remote locations in the Julian Alps and are the only accommodation available to hikers. The huts are basic and have dorm-style rooms that each sleep four, with shared bathrooms. The huts are comfortable in a rustic way and offer plenty of character and history—some of the huts date back to the early 19th century. Your stay is usually only for one night and the stunning scenery that you will wake up to is certainly worth it.

For the rest of the itinerary you will stay in well-located city hotels, cosy log cottages in alpine meadows and boutique-style mountain lodges—some with their own wellness centres.

#### **MEALS**

Slovenia has developed into a real foodie destination thanks to its diverse range of cuisine. In what can be seen as a gastronomic stamp of approval, in 2020, Michelin produced its first guide to the country. Slovenian food draws influence from its neighbouring countries Austria, Italy, Hungary and Croatia and there is a strong focus on sustainable and farm-fresh produce. Like its neighbours, it has a long tradition in winemaking that extends back to the time of the Romans. Eastern Slovenia is a major hops-growing region and beer, particularly craft beer is popular with the locals.

All of our Slovenia itineraries include daily breakfasts as well as some lunches and dinners (see individual trip itineraries for meal inclusions).

#### **Breakfast**

They say breakfast is the most important meal of the day and this is even truer for walkers. The breakfast offering will vary depending on the accommodation and in particular, its location. More remote areas may be limited in their breakfast spread. However, generally breakfast will include cold/cured meats, cereals, eggs, fruit juice, coffee and tea. Breakfast is usually served between 7-9am.

#### Lunch

Depending on the location on the trail, included lunches might consist of a packed picnic lunch (such as a salad or sandwich, fruit and snacks) or lunch at a local restaurant with cold/cured meats (including the local prosciutto), a hot main dish and dessert. When lunches are not included we will advise you where you can buy your lunch.

#### Dinner

Dinner is usually not included as our guests often prefer the freedom to eat on their own schedule and budget. Included dinners are usually hearty local meals with a main of fish/meat and potatoes or stews or pasta dish followed by a dessert.

We encourage you to make the most of the opportunity to sample the dishes and specialties of the region that you walk through. There is nothing like a good day's walking to enhance your appreciation of a well-cooked meal, and it sets you up well for the next day ahead.





#### What to try:

- Pumpkin seed oil—an excellent salad dressing and ice cream topping
- Homemade kruh (bread)
- Prsut—air-dried, thinly sliced ham/prosciutto produced in the karst region
- · Fresh seafood in coastal Piran
- Potica—a nut or savoury-filled roll popular with locals
- Blejska kremna rezina (Bled cream cake) layers of vanilla custard, whipped cream and flaky pastry
- Burek—a street food with flaky pastry stuffed with meat, cheese or apple

#### Wine and Beer

Slovenian wine has a very full flavour due to the terra rosa (red soil) in the karst region. Our guided Julian Alps trek includes a wine tasting, and our self-guided Vineyards, Karst and Coast trek takes you through Slovenia's beautiful wine region. Slovenia is a major producer of hops, which are an essential component in brewing. They're used locally to produce the two most popular pilsners: Zlatorog and Union beer. We do suggest keeping alcohol consumption low on trekking days, as alcohol will have an effect on your fitness, especially in the Alpine region.

#### **Special dietary requirements**

While most dietary restrictions can be catered for if we are notified in advance, you do need to let us know at the time of booking so we can confirm with our accommodation hosts.

#### **HEALTH**

Please be aware that tick-borne infections and diseases can be a hazard to hikers. You should always check your body for ticks after a day hiking in areas of bush, forests and woodland.

Although there are no specific health requirements for this trip, to participate fully in an active travel experience you need to be in good physical health. Read the trip itineraries on the website thoroughly and then realistically self-assess your physical ability to complete the trip as described. Our Destination Experts are available to answer any questions you have to help you choose the most suitable trip for you.

If you have any medical conditions, you should consult your doctor to assess your suitability of participating in your selected trip before booking. You also need to declare, for assessment, any pre-existing medical conditions to your travel insurance provider.

It is essential that all RAW travellers have comprehensive travel insurance. We sell Cover-More travel insurance and you can easily get a quote over the phone.



## **SECTION 2: TRAVEL ESSENTIALS**

#### **Vaccinations**

No vaccinations are compulsory to enter Slovenia, however please see your doctor for up-to-date information on recommended health precautions.

#### **First-aid supplies**

We recommend that you carry first-aid supplies for common ailments (and take any personal medical requirements). Suggested supplies include (but are not limited to):

- band-aids, bandages and dressings
- blister pads or zinc oxide tape/moleskin to cover 'hot spots' on feet to stop potential blisters developing
- antiseptic for cuts and scrapes
- high factor sunscreen and lip balm
- headache tablets
- · antihistamine tablets
- diarrhoea treatment

#### **Preventing blisters**

The key to preventing blisters and avoiding unnecessary pain is to eliminate friction. Different things work for different people, but one thing's for sure: blisters can be prevented with a little bit of effort. The best strategy is to keep an awareness of how your feet are feeling and recognise if there is discomfort or a 'hot spot' developing. Take off your boots and see if a sore spot is developing before it turns into a blister.

Here's a range of blister prevention strategies different clients have found work for them. There are no hard and fast rules here, what works for one person may not work for another person as feet are very individual. Test a few out on your training walks and see if they are effective for you.

- Buy comfortable, well-fitting walking boots.
- Toughen up. Condition your feet by walking, gradually building intensity, pace and distance.
- Moisturise your feet with a good quality foot cream after showering.

- Adjust your laces during your walk so that your shoes fit perfectly. Foot swelling and different temperatures and terrain will affect the fit of your boots.
- Use hiking wool—a fine wool that you wrap around your toes to prevent them rubbing together; many of our clients swear by it!
- Put cornflour or talcum powder in your socks to keep your feet dry.
- · Keep your toenails short.
- Invest in good socks. Use moisture-wicking socks and consider double-layers. Experiment with the thickness of your socks, and change them whenever your feet get wet.
- Apply tape (such as Fixomull) or dressings to reduce friction. It can be difficult to perfect the technique and can be time consuming, so you'll need to practise.
- Carry blister pads in your daypack. The cushioned gel pad immediately reduces pain and promotes fast healing. You can even use them to prevent blisters.
- See a podiatrist if you think the way you walk might predispose you to blisters. You might need orthotics.

#### **Blister treatment**

Broken blisters that are leaking fluid should be disinfected and bandaged. Small blisters that are not painful should be left alone because the best protection against infection is the blister's own skin. These will heal by themselves and will be reabsorbed in a few days. If you do have blisters, shower in the evening to allow your feet to be fully dry when you dress them and set off in the morning.



#### **VISAS**

Australian citizens visiting Slovenia do not require a visa if they are staying not more than 90 out of 180 days and hold a passport with at least six months validity (from date of entry) with two blank visa pages. As requirements can change without notice, it is your responsibility to check for updated information on visas prior to travelling.

#### **SMARTRAVELLER**

Be informed. Be prepared. Stay smart while you are travelling. Smartraveller is provided by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and provides up-to-date travel advice for Australians travelling overseas. You can subscribe to receive free updates, including about widespread health or security issues.

www.smarttraveller.gov.au

#### TRAVEL INSURANCE

If you are travelling on any trip with RAW Travel you will require comprehensive travel insurance. We sell Cover-More travel insurance and you can easily get a quote over the phone. No one plans for anything to go wrong, but if it does we want to make sure that you have adequate cover.

We highly recommend you purchase cover as soon as you start booking your travel arrangements, and include cancellation cover. Your travel insurance also must include emergency evacuation and medical cover.

Please contact your insurance provider to ensure your policy covers you for your specific needs. Carry a copy of your policy and your insurer's 24-hour contact details.

Any advice given here is a general guide only. Please research and purchase a policy best suited to your needs and circumstances.

Find out more:

10 things you need to know about travel insurance

#### **WHAT TO PACK**

On this trip, your main luggage is transported for you while you walk, so you'll only be walking with a daypack. Your trip cost includes daily transfer of one piece of luggage per person on trekking days. Still, pack as lightly as possible and keep the weight of your main bag to under 20kg. Keep in mind that you may have to carry your suitcase up stairs in some accommodation so the lighter your luggage is, the better.

You will need to bring a good daypack when out walking to carry a few clothing layers, lunch/snacks and personal effects. We recommend carrying at least 2 litres of water a day, and on hot days, more.

Laundromats are not common in rural areas in Slovenia, so plan to hand wash small items if required.

#### RECOMMENDED SPECIALIST GEAR

#### Waterproof walking boots or shoes

Waterproof hiking boots or hiking shoes (not sneakers) with a good tread and ankle support are recommended for this walk. Make sure your footwear is well worn in and comfortable. We also recommend proper hiking socks that are breathable, and well fitting, as you will find these minimise the chance of getting blisters (see pXX).

Find out more:

What boots should I buy and how do I look after them?

#### **Trekking poles**

We recommend trekking poles for hiking in Slovenia. They will give you extra stability for the steep ascents and descents, especially when you are tired. We definitely recommend them if you have or had issues with sore knees, ankles or hips.

Do I need trekking poles and which ones should I buy?







#### OTHER ITEMS TO PACK

#### Mobile phone

On self-guided trips you should always carry a fully-charged mobile phone. At times, you will be walking in remote areas so it is good to know that you have the ability to call for help should you need it. We also suggest you have access to Wi-Fi as it can help you in your navigation on the trail and also when you are locating your accommodation.

#### **Travel documents**

- Passport (with photocopies/scanned back-up copy/photo on your phone)
- Copy of your travel insurance policy and 24hour contact number
- Airline and other ticket(s)
- Credit card and spending money in local currency – Euro (€)
- Guidebooks, phrasebooks

#### **Personal items**

- Blister kit, rehydration salts, sunscreen and first-aid kit including any personal medications
- Toiletries
- Water bottle(s) or hydration pack (2+ litres recommended)
- · Broad-brimmed hat
- High UV sunglasses
- Comfortable daypack with rain cover
- Waterproof bags for rain protection while walking
- Tick and insect repellent
- · Anti-chafe creams

#### **Clothing**

- Several pairs of walking socks
- T-shirts (lightweight quick drying fabric)
- Long-sleeved trekking shirts (avoid cotton)
- Shorts
- Lightweight trousers (avoid jeans)
- Warm fleece and sweater

- Warm beanie and gloves for spring and autumn if hiking the Julian Alps
- Waterproof and breathable rain jacket and over trousers
- Spare pair of trainers
- Swimwear

#### Miscellaneous

- · Alarm clock and LED head torch
- Compass
- Mobile phone charger
- Camera and spare batteries for camera
- Reading and writing material
- Pair of thongs for inside shared amenities
- Knee brace not essential but useful for injury
- Hand sanitiser
- Miniatures of your usual toiletries (decant them into old hotel amenity bottles)
- Snacks—though these can be purchased locally
- · Swiss army knife
- Padlock for bag



## **SECTION 2: TRAVEL ESSENTIALS**

#### HOW TO BOOK YOUR RAW TRAVEL TRIP

Before making a booking, please read this Destination Guide thoroughly to make sure that you have selected the right walking trip for you. We have compiled lots of important information about accommodation, food, fitness required, weather and what to expect so that you can make an informed decision. On our website you'll also find detailed itineraries and other important information.

A deposit is due at the time of booking and balance of payment is required as per booking conditions. All quotes are subject to availability at the time of booking and valid for 7 days. Please contact your Destination Expert for your personalised booking link. Alternatively click the 'Book Now' button on the trip page and complete the booking form.

When you submit your booking form, you are committing to an itinerary and travel

dates. Any changes to the itinerary and/or travel dates after arrangements have been confirmed will incur additional charges.

#### **PARTICIPATION CONDITIONS**

To travel with RAW Travel you must accept the <u>Booking Conditions</u> which include the following:

When booking on one of our trips you understand that we operate adventure trips worldwide. These trips inherently involve a higher level of personal risk, which you agree to fully assume. You accept that in developing countries, the standards of accommodation, transport, safety, hygiene, telecommunication facilities, level of infrastructure development and medical facilities are generally not equivalent to your usual living arrangements, or that which you would typically find on a conventional holiday.



#### **RAW TRAVELLER'S CODE**

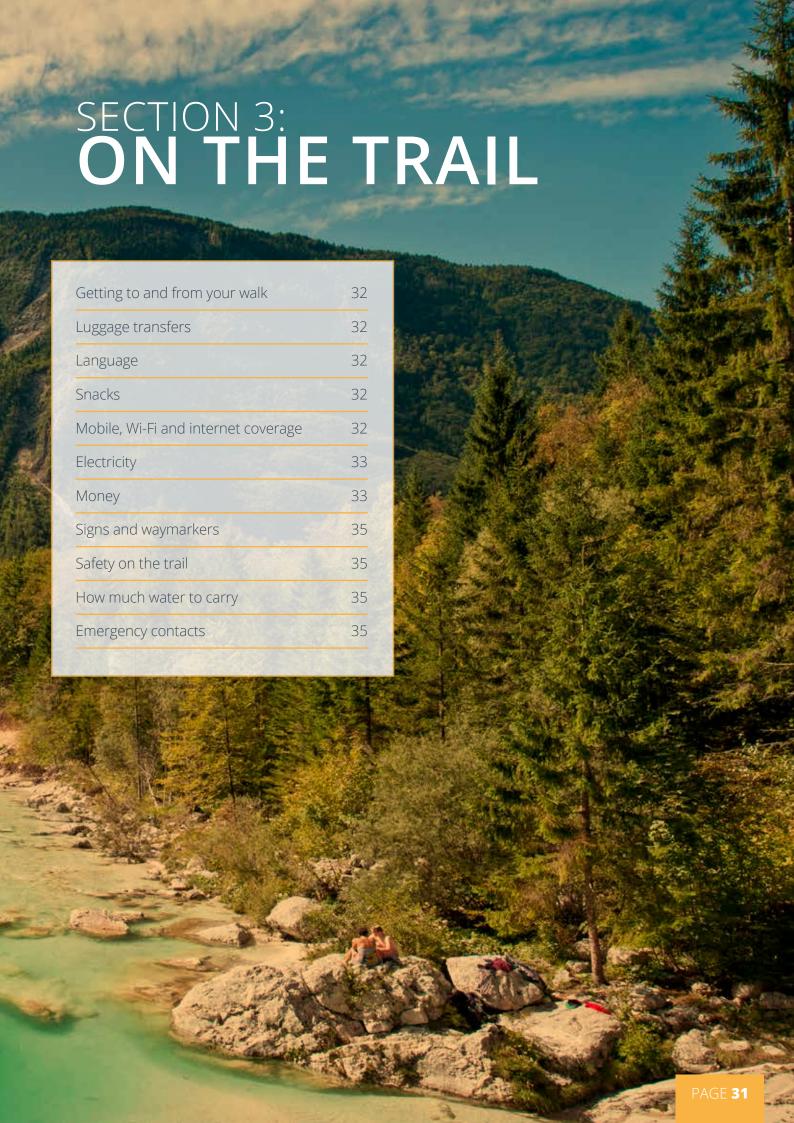
By paying your deposit and completing your booking forms with us, you signal your agreement to the following RAW Traveller's Code:

- I have chosen a trip that suits my abilities, level of fitness, and state of health.
- I do not have any physical conditions or disabilities that are a hazard to me or other RAW travellers.
- I have a valid passport and all necessary visas and vaccinations required for travel.
- I will read the RAW travel pre-trip materials about clothing, medical requirements, and culture-specific etiquette.
- I will respect the laws and customs of countries visited.
- I will follow environmental guidelines and regulations while on the trip in accordance with the RAW Travel leader's direction.
- I will respect the rights and privacy of other trip members.
- I understand that travel within a group invariably involves compromise to accommodate diverse desires, travel goals, personalities, and physical abilities of all group members.

- RAW Travel leaders may be required to improvise and exercise good faith, use discretion and/or make decisions based upon group consensus. These decisions may not always please each individual but are intended to satisfy the larger desires of the group.
- I understand that RAW Travel reserves the right to refuse participation during a tour to anyone whose health or behaviour could impede the welfare or enjoyment of fellow guests. An individual may be asked to leave a trip if RAW Travel feels that the person's continuing participation may prove detrimental to the individual or group. RAW Travel will not be responsible for any costs incurred or to refund any unused services in this instance.
- I understand travelling off the beaten track means access to medical facilities and evacuation services may be limited.
- I understand the weather is out of RAW Travel's control and RAW Travel cannot be held liable for disruptions caused to your travel plans or ability to take or enjoy a trip impacted by extreme weather.
- I will always wear a helmet when riding bikes.
- I will drink alcohol responsibly.







## **SECTION 3: ON THE TRAIL**

#### **GETTING TO AND FROM YOUR WALK**

You will need to make your own way to the meeting point hotel, details of which will be provided in your pre-departure documents.

www.rome2rio is a great website with suggestions on how you can get from A to B.

Arrival by air: The major international airport in Slovenia is Jože Pučnik Airport, located 24km north-west of Ljubljana. Taxi, bus and shuttle services operate frequently to the city centre and cost from €4-45 depending on the mode of transport selected. Taxis and shuttle service takes approximately 25 minutes but bus routes can take up to 50 minutes.

Arrival by train: You can travel into Ljubljana by train from surrounding European countries <a href="https://www.slo-zeleznice.si/en/">https://www.slo-zeleznice.si/en/</a>

#### Onward travels from the end of your hike

Our itineraries finish at either Piran or Lake Bled.

#### From Piran:

You may wish to rent a car in seaside Piran to explore Croatia's coast or the eastern and south-eastern parts of Slovenia. Alternatively there are shuttle services to take you back to Ljubljana, the airport, or to Venice or Trieste in Italy. A ferry service can take you from Piran to Venice in under three hours. Ask your Destination Expert for further details about adding this option on to your booking. They can also advise on extending your trip with weekends in nearby cities.

#### From Lake Bled:

Lake Bled is one of Slovenia's main attractions. It's a great place for sports activities like hiking and biking, and you can also swim, row or stand-up-paddle across the lake to explore the famous island and its church. A bus from Lake Bled to Ljubljana takes just over an hour, or it's a half-hour journey by car.

#### **LUGGAGE TRANSFERS**

On all walking days, your main luggage (one piece of max 20kg) will be transferred to your next accommodation. It will be picked up

from your accommodation each morning, so you'll need to have it packed and ready before leaving for the day. When you check-in to your accommodation, ask where you should leave your luggage in the morning.

Please clearly mark all of your luggage to avoid delays, mix ups or loss.

Keep in mind that you may have to carry your luggage upstairs at some accommodation, so it is best to keep your luggage weight as light as possible.

#### **LANGUAGE**

The official language is Slovene. Most Slovenians speak at least one other foreign language, usually English, Hungarian or Italian. Slovene can be difficult for visitors to learn but below are a few useful words to use on your travels:

English	Slovene
Hello	Zdravo (zdra-vo)
Goodbye	Na svidenje (na svee-den-ye)
Please	Prosim (pro-seem)
Thank you	Hvala (hva-la)
Excuse me	Dovolite (do-vo-lee-te)
Sorry	Oprostite (op-ros-tee-te)
Yes	Da
No	Ne

#### **SNACKS**

Light, high energy food like trail mix, protein bars and dark chocolate are good for snacks. If you have specific dietary requirements or certain snacks that you prefer, we suggest you bring some from home.

#### MOBILE, WI-FI AND INTERNET COVERAGE

Mobile coverage on the trail can go from excellent in the more populated towns to non-existent in more remote areas. Global roaming charges can be expensive but check with your provider for details. A pre-paid sim is a good idea and you can purchase travel sims at

♠ Australia Post, online through ♠ Travel Sim or in-country at the airport or supermarkets, kiosks and petrol stations.

Free Wi-Fi is available in some of the accommodation that we book but sometimes it can be intermittent or slow. More remote accommodation will not have internet access.

Slovenia's international dialling code is +386

We highly recommend that you download to your mobile the following free apps, which are free or more cost effective than standard Australian mobile phone carrier charges.

- www.whatsapp.com
- www.skype.com/en
- www.viber.com/en

#### **ELECTRICITY**

Slovenia has two types of electrical plugs. One is a 2-round pin plug and the other is a 2-round pin plug with two earth clips on the side. The standard voltage is 220V.

#### **MONEY**

Slovenia uses the Euro. At the time of writing the exchange rate was AUD\$1 = €0.61.

#### **Tipping**

Restaurants: most tourists tip 10% of the bill for good service but check the bill first to see if a service charge has been added.

*Pubs*: tips are not expected here unless table service is provided.

*Taxis*: it is appreciated if you round up the fare to the nearest Euro.

Hotels: not expected and at your discretion.

*Guide*: again tipping is not expected but should you feel that you have received excellent service and support from a guide, then a tip is appreciated, but this is at your discretion.

#### **Spending money**

Every traveller is different and therefore spending money requirements will vary. Some travellers may drink more than others while other travellers like to purchase more souvenirs than most. Please consider your own spending habits when it comes to allowing for drinks, shopping, souvenirs and other personal expenses. You will also need to budget for lunch and dinners not included in your trip price.

#### **Cash and ATMs**

There are a number of ATM cash points that accept Visa, American Express and MasterCard at towns across Slovenia. However, some smaller, more remote villages will not have these facilities so we recommend that you take out enough cash in the bigger towns, to last you between one cashpoint and the next. Credit cards are accepted in most restaurants and shops but it is advisable to always carry enough cash on you in the event a credit card is not accepted. Money can also be exchanged at banks, post offices and some tourist offices and travel agencies. Some will charge a commission.

Let your bank know well in advance that you are travelling overseas and will be making purchases and cash withdrawals so that your account is not locked due to suspicious activity. Also confirm your daily withdrawal limit, and applicable fees. Some banks now refund international ATM withdrawal fees, so ask around.

#### **Emergency funds**

Ensure you have access to additional funds to be used if unforeseen incidents or circumstances outside our control (e.g. a natural disaster) necessitate a change to your planned route. This is a rare occurrence but we recommend being prepared. Some comprehensive travel insurance companies will make payments on your behalf in an emergency. Some more basic covers require you to pre-pay yourself then make a claim. Do your research before you travel.



#### SIGNS AND WAYMARKERS

Alpe-Adria Trail: is generally well sign-posted. The trail logo appears on signboards, spray painted on the edge of the path or as stickers fastened to existing signposts.

*Juliana Trail*: is a well marked trail making it easy to navigate.

#### **SAFETY IN SLOVENIA**

Slovenia often ranks in the top 10 Global Peace Index with a "very high" state of peace. Still, if you are travelling to Slovenia—or any other country in the world, for that matter—you are not immune from risk. For more information, please talk to one of our Destination Experts.

#### **Navigation**

Poor signposting can make navigation difficult, and while the trails are mainly well signposted and well-formed, you need to be confident reading a map and interpreting walk notes.

All our clients have access to a 7-day/ 24-hour hotline (both locally and in Australia) in the event of any emergencies.

#### **Keeping safe:**

- Make sure someone knows your plans every day that you're on the trail. If you don't turn up or call the place where you are staying each evening, they will raise the alarm.
- Fill up with water at every opportunity and carry high-energy snacks.
- Always carry a torch (with spare batteries), compass, map, mobile phone and wetweather gear, and some back-up high calorie food.
- Carry a basic first-aid kit along with any personal medications/epi-pens if you have specific allergies.
- Carry a mobile phone and make sure you have emergency contact numbers in your phone or in an easy to reach place when you go out walking each day. In the event of any medical emergency while on the trail, call 112 (emergency) or 113 (Police).

 If you can no longer walk due to injury, please contact our local representative who will assist you in arranging transport and medical services.

#### **Bears**

Brown bears live in the forests and woods of Slovenia. However the majority inhabit the southern part of Slovenia, where we do not have any itineraries. Bear sightings are rare and bear attacks even more so. Bears are naturally shy creatures will most likely scamper away when they hear people coming.

#### **Unpredictable** weather

It's wise to find out what the weather will be like before you set off for the day. Consider altering your plans accordingly and make sure that you have the right gear and pack enough snacks and water with you.

Slovenia does experience avalanches, flash flooding and mudslides. Take weather warnings seriously in Alpine areas. Western Slovenia is on an earthquake fault line, and you may feel occasional tremors.

#### **HOW MUCH WATER TO CARRY**

Dehydration is the biggest risk when undertaking a physical activity. It is vital to be aware of your fluid intake and to constantly drink water throughout the day, even when you do not feel thirsty. You will need to carry at least 2 litres of drinking water with you most days, more if the weather is warm and if you are above average body weight. Tap water is safe to drink. If you are hiking in the mountains and unsure about the water, check with your guide or boil the water for 10 minutes or use water purifying tablets or sticks which can be purchased at most outdoor stores.

#### **EMERGENCY CONTACTS**

#### Slovenia

Emergency 112/ Police 113

RAW Travel office (Victoria, Australia) Monday to Friday +61 3 5976 3763

If there is a genuine emergency outside of business hours call +61 (0) 478 649 848



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## **SECTION 4: RAW TRAVEL**

#### **ABOUT RAW TRAVEL**

RAW Travel is Australia's most experienced and innovative walking company. Founded by avid walkers and responsible travel advocates Dave and Melinda Reynolds, RAW Travel is a family-owned business with a proud history of operating walks for 20+ years. We have introduced many thousands of happy travellers to their first multi-day walk or cycle.

RAW connects people to the world through sustainable adventure travel by focusing on a limited selection of the world's best walking adventures that excite, inspire and challenge. We specialise in self-guided trips and offer unrivalled flexibility in tailormaking itineraries.

Our staff are experienced hikers with a passion for exploring and going above and beyond for our customers. We provide a friendly, personal and expert service. The intimate knowledge we have of our chosen

walking destinations allows us to create exciting journeys for our clients while taking meticulous care of all the details.

Check out our amazing walking destinations online or visit us at our beachside location in the Victorian coastal town of Mornington. You can easily make an appointment with one of our Destination Experts and afterwards browse the many shops, cafes, beaches or nearby vineyards of the Mornington Peninsula.

#### **OUR PEOPLE**

We have an experienced, dedicated and passionate team in our Mornington Head Office, as well as expert guides and support staff on the ground in Europe, Japan, UK and Australia. We have many things in common, including a passion for walking, a love of adventure travel in beautiful and historic locations, and the ability to go above and beyond to make our clients' travel dreams become a reality.



## **EUROPEAN ALPS**

### Why book your trip with RAW Travel?

Our trips are flexible and tailored to you!

- ✓ We listen to our walkers; we'll plan an itinerary to suit your needs and ability.
- ✓ We operate our own trips.
- ✓ We have staff dedicated to each destination: you get first-hand advice from people who know the walks.
- ✓ We have our own staff in-country, so help is never far away should you need it.
- ✓ We offer authentic travel and unrivalled experience.



#### **OUR COMMITMENT**

We won't cut corners or ever intentionally compromise the quality of your trip. We don't want to run thousands of trips every year – because the quality of your experience is much more important than quantity to us. We're still small enough to care about our travellers as individuals and we want to stay that way!

We know that people desire a certain level of comfort along with their adventure, so great accommodation and discovering delicious local food is a hallmark of our trips. RAW Travel owns and operates its own adventures, with our own staff on the ground in many destinations so we are able to keep control over the quality of our trips at the same time as we offer you reassurance and support. We take notice of the feedback you give us and your opinions do matter.

As a primarily 'direct to customer' company we avoid the commissions and overheads associated with the traditional travel distribution network. We charge fair prices but still provide great advice before you go, experienced leaders who love their groups, good quality accommodation and solid value for your money.

#### **EXPERT, FRIENDLY SERVICE**

We're a specialist company and we enjoy providing a friendly, personal service where you're treated as an individual – no call centres here!

At RAW Travel we don't just plan your travel, we take our clients on a journey. From your research and ideas we work with you to plan your dream travel experience. We consider your fitness levels, your achievements, your motivations and then together we map out every step of the journey.

## **SECTION 4: RAW TRAVEL**

Our Destination Experts deliver a level of advice and experience that comes from being 100% focused on our chosen walks, rather than hundreds of different trips, as is often the case with bigger companies. We pride ourselves on our intimate knowledge of our chosen walking destinations and we really do "know because we go".

Our staff take these walks each year and share their insider insights with you to help create exciting journeys where you can experience the best of your chosen destination, while being reassured that all the details are taken care of. Help is never far away should you need it from our locally-based staff and suppliers.

#### **GIVING BACK AND TREADING LIGHTLY**



At RAW Travel we're committed to reducing our carbon footprint by offsetting all our trips and flights. We use small local suppliers to ensure the benefits of travel are distributed equally and reach those people who need it the most.

We give 10% of our annual profits for environmental causes and social purpose. Our staff are also given volunteering time for carefully-selected social and environmental causes.

By contributing to initiatives that benefit our environment — as well as carbon offsetting our travel activities and those of our customers — we can be a good role model for the travel industry and help bring about more sustainable practices. So your choice of a walking trip with RAW Travel is a more positive choice for the planet.

#### **BUSINESS AS A FORCE FOR GOOD**

#### Certified



This company meets the highest standards of social and environmental impact

Corporation

RAW Travel is a certified Benefit Corporation (B Corp). B Corps are a growing group of companies who are reinventing business by pursuing purpose as well as profit.

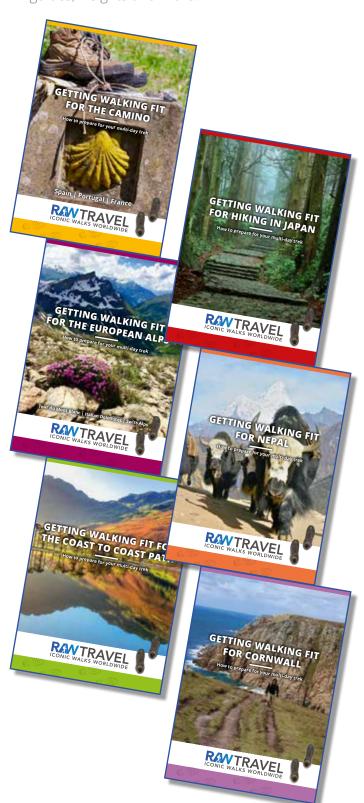
As well as playing our part in ensuring we account positively for the environmental impacts we have through travelling, we want people to continue to enjoy their travelling and feel positive about it, so we carbon-offset all trips and flights booked with us, and we plant a tree for every customer. None of these costs are passed on to our travellers.

RAW Travel is also a supporter of KIVA micro-credit finance, which is empowering women, in particular, to access loans to improve their family's living conditions and their communities.

Through the hundreds of charity fundraising trips we ran between 2003 and 2017, RAW Travel has been a long-time supporter of initiatives and charities that create just societies, tackle poverty, encourage gender equality and combat sex trafficking in Asia. We are proud that the challenges we ran raised over \$18 million for many diverse charitable causes.

## FREE RESOURCES TO HELP YOU PLAN YOUR TRIP

We've got inspirational brochures, essential preparation guides, comprehensive destination guides, insights and more!



#### **TRIP GRADINGS**

RAW Travel offers a range of multi-day walks for complete beginners through to demanding treks that will satisfy and thrill even veteran adventurers. We have graded each RAW Travel trip from 1 (introductory) to 10 (tough).

Our grading system is intended to differentiate only the walks that RAW Travel offers, so they won't necessarily match another travel company's assessment of their trips.

We have used several criteria to assess the difficulty of each walk we offer, including the number of hours walking required each day, terrain and conditions underfoot, weather, gradient, altitude, signage and facilities. Basic accommodation and food in remote areas will contribute to a walk being graded more difficult. Keep in mind that if a walk is graded moderate, it doesn't mean you will never feel tired.

Our multi-day walks require a suitable level of physical preparation. More detail is provided in our essential free guides to getting walking fit, which are available for each of our destinations.

Find out more: PAW Travel Trip Gradings

#### **RAW TRAVEL NEWS**

It's easy to stay up-to-date on all things RAW Travel with our free monthly e-news. It's bursting with information about new trips and insights. If you're not already a subscriber, it's easy to register.

Find out more: http://rawtravel.com





#### **FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK**

We love connecting with like-minded travellers on social media and we'd like you to be part of our RAW Travel community. We regularly share tips and resources, as well as photos and stories from other travellers and our staff. Like and follow us, and be sure to give us a shout out to say hello. We really enjoy reading comments from our community of travellers!

www.facebook.com/rawtravel/

#### FREE TRAVEL INFORMATION NIGHTS

We love meeting our clients face-to-face and getting to know them. We travel around Australia and New Zealand to talk about a selection of our iconic walks. If you have ever wanted to experience an iconic walk with RAW Travel then come to one of these events. We guarantee you'll be inspired by trip insights, videos and stunning images from our Destination Experts.

Find out more: http://rawtravel.com/talks/

#### 'WALK AND TALK' TRAINING DAYS

We love to walk and we love to talk! During the year, we regularly offer opportunities (in Victoria) to go on walks with our Destination Experts and ask questions about your chosen destination, pre-departure preparation and gear. We limit these walks to between 20 and 25 people (depending on the location). The pace in generally relaxed so there is plenty of time to chat.

Find out more: • RAW Travel Events

#### **BOOK YOUR FLIGHTS WITH US**

RAW Travel is a Business Class and Premium Economy Flights Specialist. We will find you the best deals and make sure you arrive well-rested to start your walk. Our in-house travel agents take the stress out of planning all the travel arrangements around your walk. They can book your international flights, give you advice about land transfers to the start

of your walk, organise the perfect city break, and more! For a personalised service that you won't find on online booking sites, along with specific destination knowledge you won't necessarily find with your own travel agent, contact RAW Travel on (03) 5973 5413 or email flights@rawtravel.com

Find out more: Maw Travel Flights

#### TRAVEL INSURANCE

If you are travelling on any trip with RAW Travel you will require comprehensive travel insurance. We sell Cover-More travel insurance and you can easily get a quote over the phone. No one plans for anything to go wrong, but if it does we want to make sure that you have adequate cover.

We highly recommend you purchase cover as soon as you start booking your travel arrangements, and include cancellation cover. Your travel insurance also must include emergency evacuation and medical cover.

Any advice given here is a general guide only. Please research and purchase a policy best suited to your needs and circumstances.

Find out more: 10 things you need to know about travel insurance

#### **CITY BREAKS**

Get the most from your time in Europe with one of our city breaks. Our city breaks offer the chance to explore and get an insider view with locals, try cultural activities and stay in unique and well-located hotels. They take the guesswork out of the bewildering range of hotels and activities in the big cities and ensure that you can make the most of your limited time. Connect with locals and find the best places to eat instead of spending your time getting lost or feeling overwhelmed about where to start!

Find out more: Make Travel City Breaks









## Australia's most innovative and inspiring walking company

1300 208 245 | info@rawtravel.com | www.rawtravel.com | 🔨







