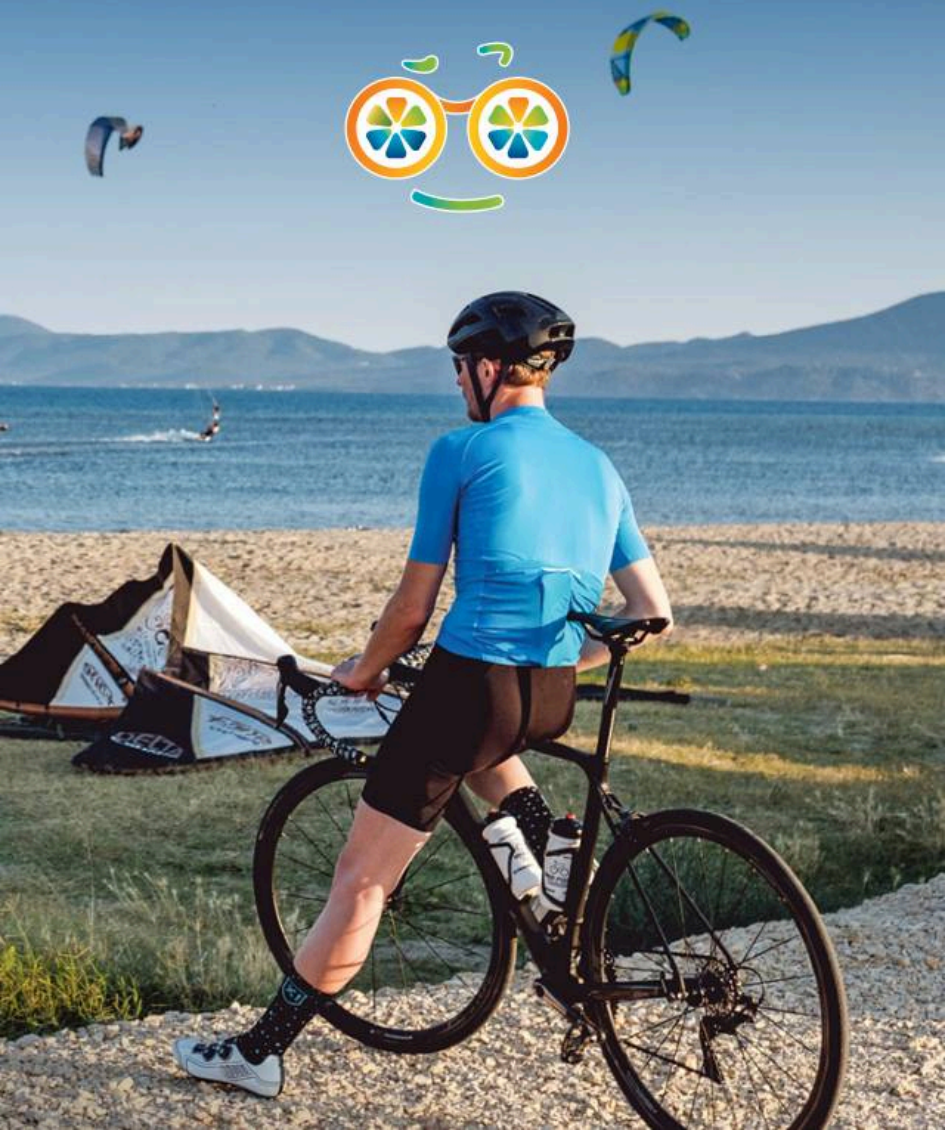


One Valley. One Sport. Different Experiences.

NERETVA VALLEY



INTRODUCTION —

INTRODUCTION

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Welcome to the Neretva Valley!

Croatia abounds in beauty, but even in a country with exceptional natural and cultural diversity, some places are unique and stand out among the rest. The Neretva River Valley is one of those places.

The power of the Neretva River has created the only river delta in Croatia. In combination with centuries of the work of human hands, the river has created a landscape of contrasts. Surrounded by white limestone hills on three sides, this fertile green plain, intersected with countless canals, is a true natural mosaic that can be endlessly discovered and enjoyed in so many ways.

You have chosen perhaps the best.

Regardless of whether you seek a sports challenge, recreational enjoyment, or an easy, interesting day outdoors, the Neretva Valley offers a diversity of experiences in a small area, true to its slogan.

Lose yourself in the endless mandarin orange plantations, work up a sweat on the climbs overlooking the spectacular

views of „Croatia's California" or head off on a multi-day exploration of not only cycling content, but also delve into the rich and interesting history, culture and local cuisine of this region.

This guide is the result of systematic and in-depth research, planning and understanding the needs of modern cyclo-tourists and the careful use of all available resources that the Neretva Valley offers, in order to facilitate you in getting to know and discovering this unique valley.

*One Valley. One Sport.
Different Experiences.*



THE NERETVA RIVER

flows through the heart of this region, giving it its name, and shaping its unique landscape. However, just a small section of the total river course runs through this area. **The Neretva River springs across the border, in Eastern Herzegovina, at an elevation of 1000 metres.** In just over 220 kilometres, the river first flows northwest, creating the border between the historical regions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, before turning south and, after Mostar and Čapljina, enters Croatia at Metković. Its final 20 kilometres flow through Croatia and form the only delta in this part of Europe, before finally entering the Adriatic Sea.

Though it is undoubtedly beautiful and interesting along its entire course, it is in the final stretch that the Neretva creates this unique, conserved and protected landscape. The present-day appearance of the Neretva Valley is the result of cooperation between nature and human hands. In the 20th century, the delta was largely regulated to turn former marshland into an agricultural haven, giving this region the nickname of „Croatia's California“.

In the Neretva Valley, agriculture has melded with nature to form an essential part of the landscape, and of the many Mediterranean crops raised here, **the mandarin orange is the most widely known symbol of this area, growing in seemingly** endless rows in plantations, particularly in the southern part of the valley.



ABOUT THE NERETVA VALLEY

The powerful beauty of the colourful fertile fields, the countless canals, mandarin plantations, clarity of the river, sand spits in the delta and the view from the surrounding hills are simply breathtaking, and form a great basis for creating cyclo-tourism products.

The bicycle touring trails in the Neretva Valley have been brought together under the tourism brand **#1valley** and the slogan **One Valley. One sport. Different Experiences.** The trails are as diverse as the region itself. From less demanding trekking routes intended for excursionists, families and recreationalists interested in enjoying the great outdoors, to demanding road routes that require excellent physical condition and technique. Cyclists can choose the experience that best suits their preferences.

Kula Norinska

The most prominent attraction in the settlement Kula Norinska is the large, Ottoman defensive tower, situated at the site where the Norin River drains into the **old course of the Neretva River**. The tower (kula) served as a military structure until the 19th century, and today stands as a symbol of the stormy history of this region. It was raised near the border between the then Ottoman Empire and the Venetian Republic, and today this is no longer a place of separation but of bringing people together.

At the tower, the northeastern part of the valley, filled with natural and nearly untouched wetlands, meets the regulated and cultivated landscape of the fertile fields of the middle of the valley. *This is particularly important information for foodies, since the clean waters feeding the Neretva River are filled with eels and frogs, the main ingredients of the famed Neretva brudet stew, and other typical Neretva delicacies.*

Metković

The Neretva Valley “begins” in Metković. The largest city in the region lies right near the state border with Bosnia and Herzegovina and is situated on both river banks, with its historical town core located on the southern bank. This is a true crossroads that has been inhabited since Illyrian times. Metković is a very practical starting place for bicycle touring and to explore the history and culture of the region.

The Natural History Museum is found in the city centre and houses an interesting ornithological collection. Just a few kilometres west in the settlement of Vid is *the Narona Archaeological Museum*,

the first in situ museum in Croatia, constructed over the temple complex dedicated to the Emperor Augustus in the centre of Narona, which was once an important Roman settlement. With all its other content and events, Metković is also significant as the starting point of the **Maraton Lada**, a unique rowing race in the **traditional Neretva lada boats** that covers a course of 20 difficult kilometres to end in Ploče.

Opuzen

The historical town of Opuzen is situated near the halfway mark of the Croatian course of the Neretva River towards its mouth. Opuzen was formed on an island surrounded by the main river course and its backwaters, and the **ever-present water is today an important part of the town's identity**. Its past dates back to Roman times, and thanks to its strategic position surrounded by the river on three sides, powerful fortresses once stood at the site of present day Opuzen. The best known is the Venetian fortress from the 17th century.

Situated in the midst of a *sea of mandarin* plantations, Opuzen is an **excellent starting place to discover the lower course of the Neretva River**. Directly nearby is the Fortica fortress, overlooking the whole Neretva River Valley. The town has a lovely historical core with traces from Roman times. The core is often a venue for interesting cultural and tourism events.

Ploče

The second largest city in the Neretva Valley is Ploče, one of Croatia's youngest towns. It was established in the latter half of the 20th century as one of the most important seaports on the Adriatic, and it has retained this status to the present day.

For visitors arriving from the west or northwest, Ploče is the “gateway to the Neretva”. This port town is surrounded by lovely nature, like the series of tame Baćina Lakes. Via the lakes, you can head upward towards the Polje Jezero karst field, a fertile plain that was created by drying out a former lake, connecting Ploče with the Dalmatinska Zagora inland area. On the other side of town, towards the southeast, we find the **main mouth of the Neretva River**, and one of the most beautiful views is seen from the Trovro hill just over the settlement of Rogotin, home to the **only wind-organ** in this part of the world.



Slivno

The “most marine” of all the Neretva municipalities, Slivno extends along the coastal part of the valley – extending from the left bank of the mouth to the town of Klek near Neum at the state border with Bosnia and Herzegovina. This geographically diverse area boasts of having a **beautiful sandy beach near Blace**, remnants of a fortress near Smrden grad, and a beautiful view of the Pelješac Peninsula and the blue Adriatic. Thanks to the coastal ambiance, the Slivno area has the highest density of accommodation and hospitality facilities.

Zažablje

„The Neretva Valley as it once was“ would be a fairly accurate description of the ambiance in the Zažablje municipality. Situated in the eastern, terrestrial part of the region, in the Zažablja area you can still find the beautiful, untouched wetland landscapes that once filled the entire valley.

The crown jewel is the beautiful Kuti Lake, found in the corner of the lowland part of this valley and proclaimed an ornithological reserve, making it an ideal destination for a photo safari on the Neretva *lada* boats.



EXPLANATION OF THE CYCLING ROUTES

TREKKING ROUTES

The trekking routes have been designed to offer the general public the greatest possible amount of enjoyment in cycling through some of the loveliest landscapes in the Neretva Valley, without having to think about whether you are fit enough or technically skilled enough to handle the route.

This is the most “leisurely” type of route of all the available routes, which in no way means you will not have a great ride. The routes are primarily flat and usually shorter, allowing you to enjoy nature with friends or family, while riding at your own tempo.

Special attention has been given to safety, so the trekking routes mostly run along gravel trails and small roads with very little traffic. While enjoying the ride and the beauty of the landscape, you will not need to think too much about anything else.

ROAD ROUTES

Those looking for a cycling challenge will find just that by selecting one of the *#1valley* road routes.

The longer routes and more significant elevation differences will make even the fittest cyclists break a sweat, ensuring a magnificent feeling of sporting success at the end of the day.

MTB

Mountain biking is present in the *#1valley* through multiple recreational and professional competitions.

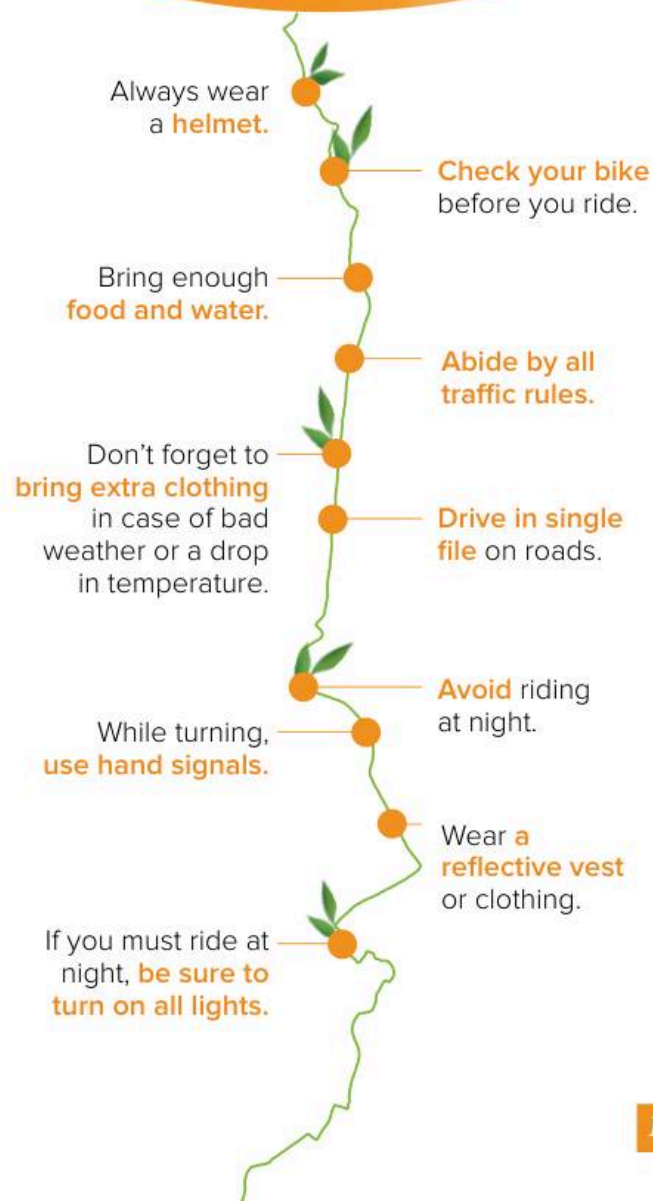
In this guide, we present one XCM trail where recreational competitions are held regularly.

REMARKS:

The starting point in all described routes is given as a recommendation. All the *#1valley* cycling routes are circular, so you can enjoy them or work up a sweat equally, wherever you decide to start.

MANDATORY EQUIPMENT AND INSTRUCTIONS

For all routes and ages



MANDA- RIN RIDE

15.1 km

TREKKING /
MTB / GRAVEL



This route leads through ...



... the attractive landscape of nearly endless mandarin orange plantations and other Mediterranean crops in the southern part of „Croatia's California“.

The route is not technically difficult, so it is intended for all types of cyclists, regardless of age and fitness level.

„The Mandarin route“ leads through the area south of the **Mala Neretva**, a channel of the river that separates from the main course in the lovely, historical town of Opuzen. The route is easy, not technically difficult, well maintained with no-traffic gravel roads where you can ride safely from the otherwise low intensity traffic in this area.

MANDARIN RIDE

ROUTE LENGTH: **15.1 km**

SURFACE: *gravel/paved*

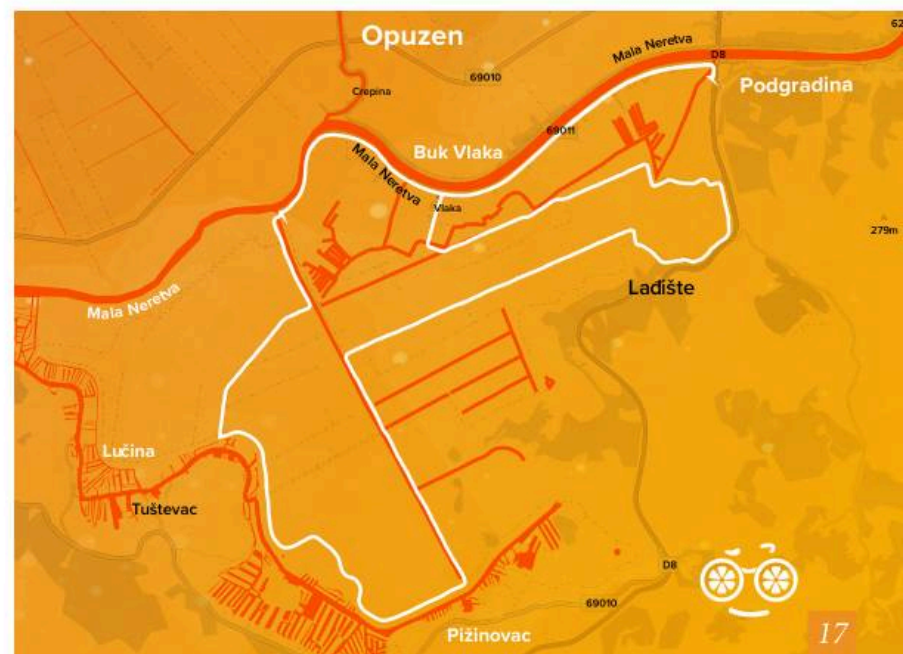
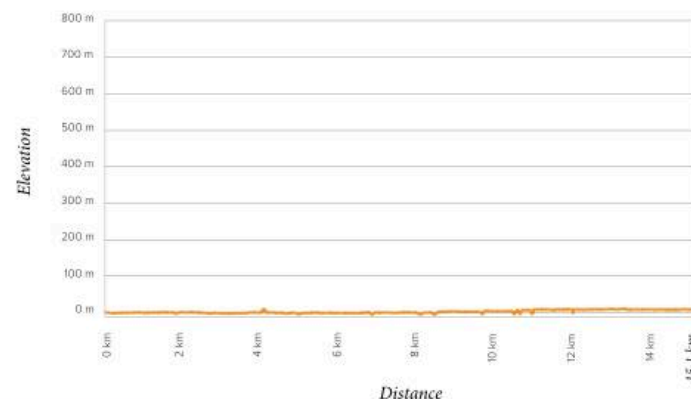
TOTAL CLIMB: **60m**

TECHNICAL DIFFICULTY: **1/5**

REQUIRED FITNESS LEVEL: **1/5**

RECOMMENDED TYPE OF BICYCLE: *trekking, MTB, gravel*

TOUR TIME: **1h**





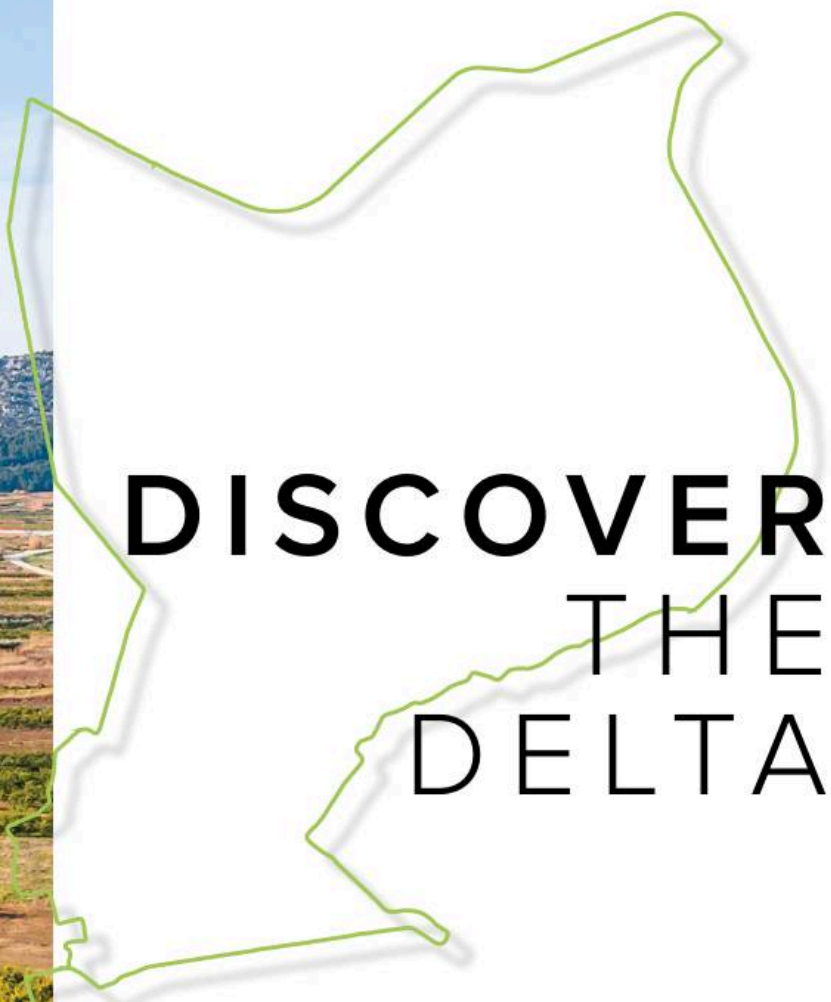
Regardless of how ripe and juicy they might be, you may **not pick the mandarins!**

Enjoy a ride through the seemingly endless rows of trees, and later you can purchase these fruits, just as fresh and tasty, from one of the many vendors selling along the roads.



FIND OUT MORE -
MANDARIN RIDE

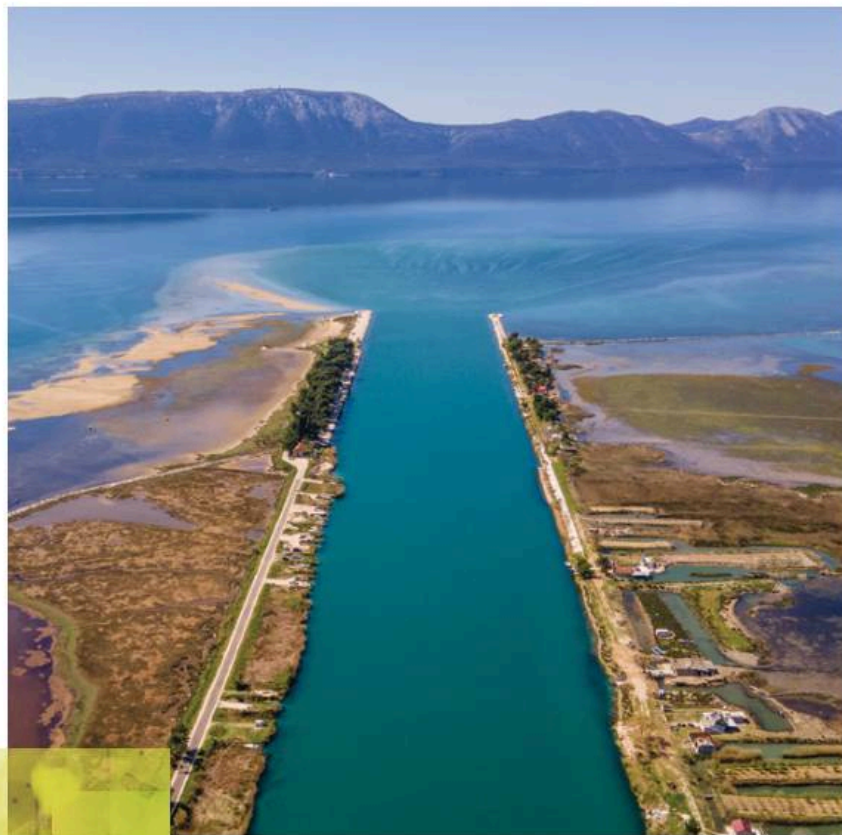


A green line-art outline map of a region, possibly a country or a large administrative area, is positioned behind the title text.

DISCOVER THE DELTA

22 km

TREKKING /
MTB / GRAVEL



The Neretva Delta ...

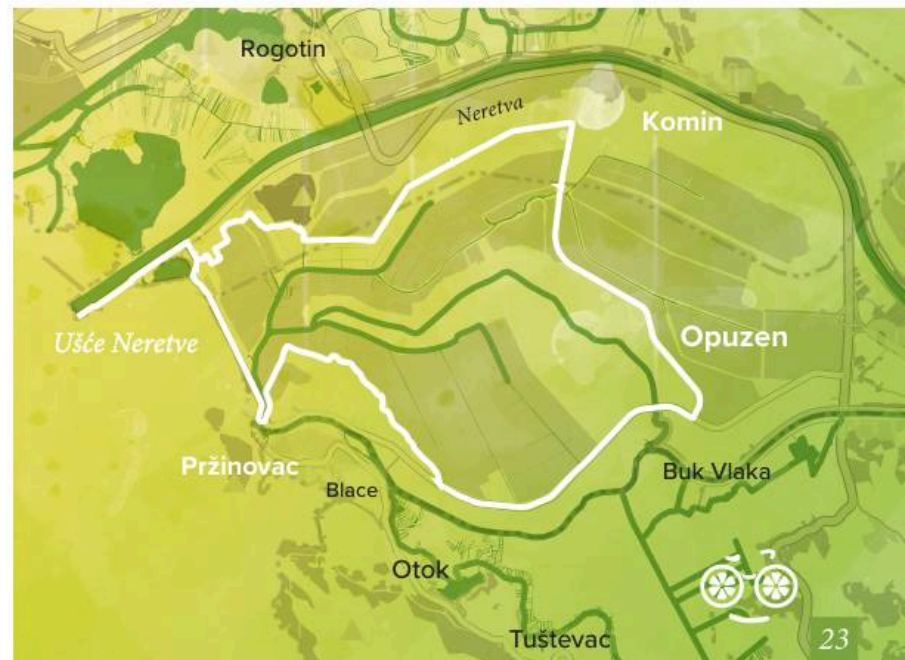
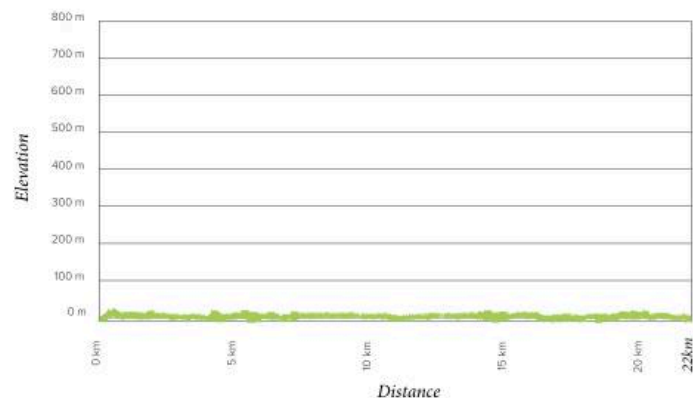
... is one of the most magical locations on the entire Croatian coast, a true and unique contrast between the blue of the sea, the earth tones of the sandy spits in the mouth, and the green, fertile fields in the delta that you will discover during this ride.

The route covers 22 kilometres through the plains without any climbs, making it technically and physically suitable for cyclists of all skill levels and age groups. The route includes well maintained gravel roads and local, paved roads with a low traffic intensity.

By riding through the delta, you will pass through the citrus plantations and fields bearing other Mediterranean fruits and vegetations, while the proximity to the sea is sensed not only by the changes in the landscape, but also by the scent of salt in the air.

DISCOVER THE DELTA

ROUTE LENGTH: **22 km**
 SURFACE: *gravel/paved*
 TOTAL CLIMB: **83m**
 TECHNICAL DIFFICULTY: **1/5**
 REQUIRED FITNESS LEVEL: **1/5**
 RECOMMENDED TYPE OF BICYCLE: *trekking, MTB, gravel*
 TOURING TIME: **1:30 hours**



The mouth of the Neretva River and the nearby beach near Blace are a sandy haven that are perfect for bathing. In addition to swimmers, when the wind conditions are just right, the sandy spits also attract dozens of **KITESURFERS** from the entire region, while in the summer season, people flock from all over Europe to kitesurf here.



TIPS
&
TRICKS



DISCOVER THE DELTA

FIND OUT MORE
DISCOVER THE DELTA



AROUND THE LAKES

9,2 km

TREKKING / MTB





AROUND THE LAKES

ROUTE LENGTH: **9,2 km**

SURFACE: *gravel/paved*

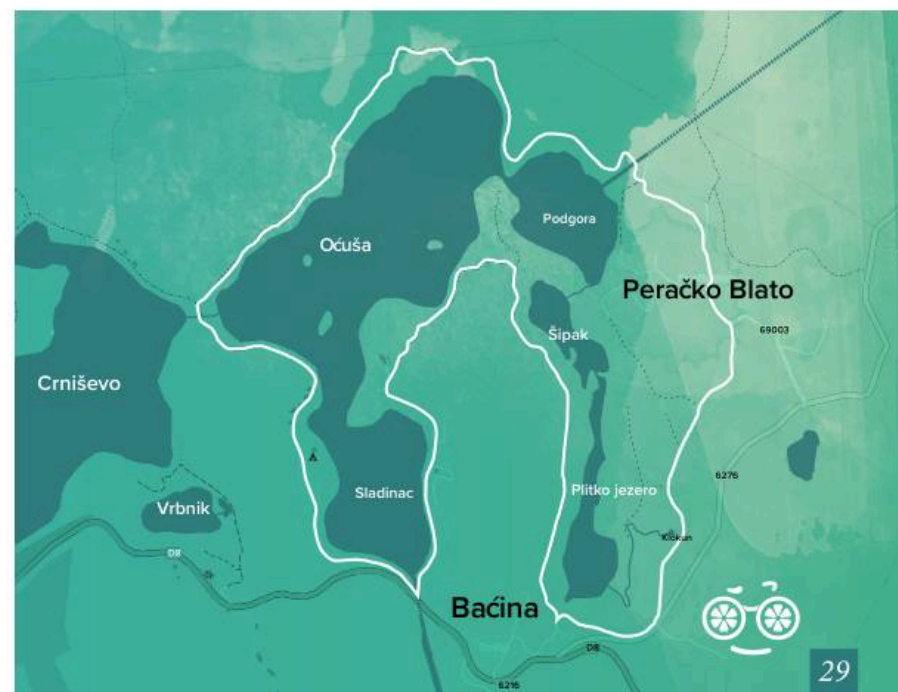
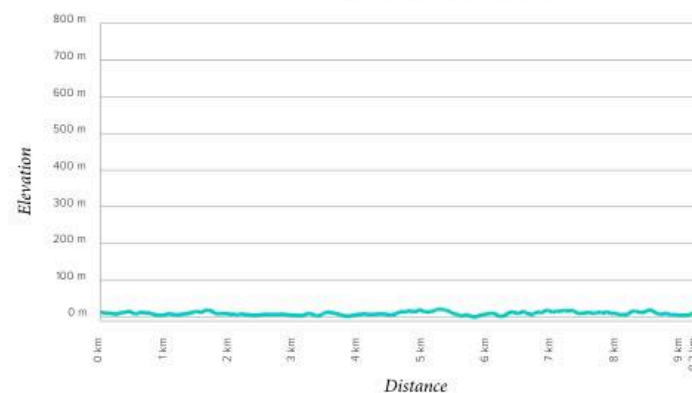
TOTAL CLIMB: **132m**

TECHNICAL DIFFICULTY: **1/5**

REQUIRED FITNESS LEVEL: **1/5**

RECOMMENDED TYPE OF BICYCLE: *trekking/MTB*

TOURING TIME: **40 min**



This circular route ...

... around the Bačina Lakes is ideal for those for whom an inspiring outing in stunning nature is more important than a serious cycling workout.

This **short and sweet trekking route** leads around the Bačina Lakes near Ploče, *unique natural phenomenon*.

The route is not challenging, but there are many other things to do here: from birdwatching, kayak rentals, to swimming and other attractions that are ideal for enjoying a day out with friends and family, or a day resting from real cycling challenges.



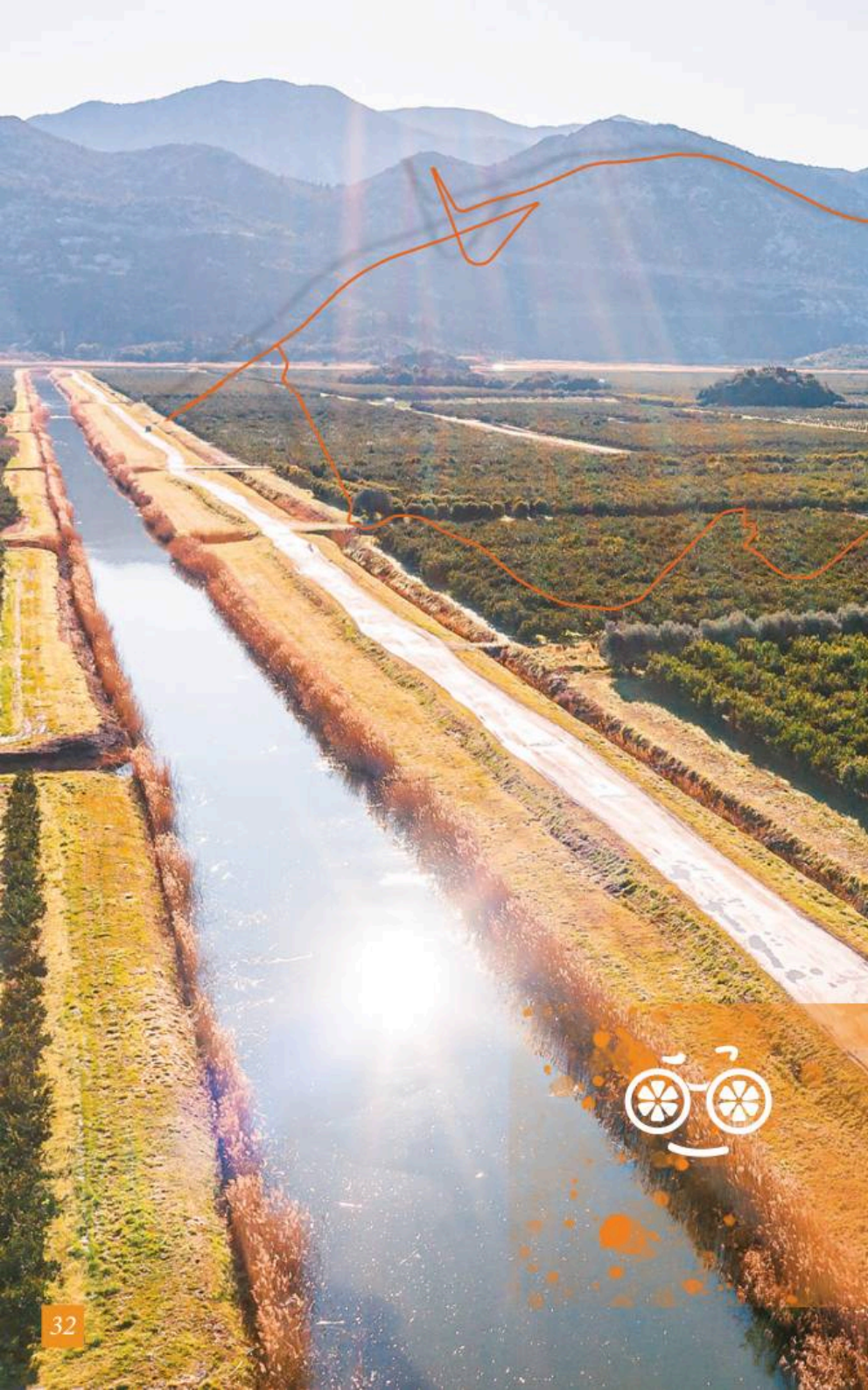
AROUND THE LAKES

The Baćina Lakes are filled by the water from the Matica River, that flows through the beautiful Polje Jezero karst field in the Dalmatinska Zagora inland, through the drainage tunnel towards Ploče. The Polje Jezero field was once a lake, which was dried out to create fertile agricultural land in the otherwise barren karst landscape. Today this is known as one of Croatia's **LARGEST WINE-GROWING** regions.



FIND OUT MORE
AROUND THE LAKES





THE HEART OF THE VALLEY



56,6 km
TREKKING

This route is physically demanding ...



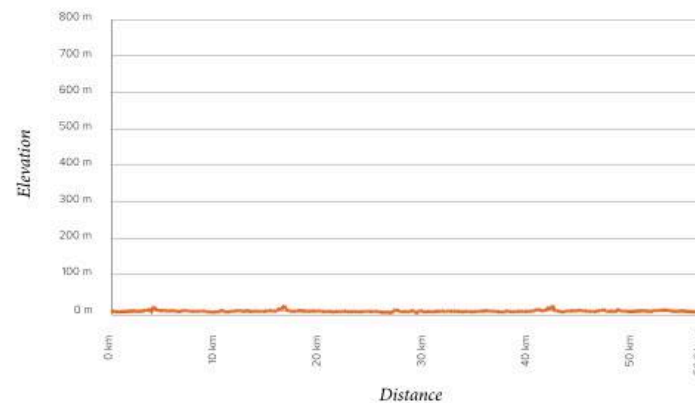
... above all due to its length. **The trekking route starts from Vid**, in front of the *Narona Archaeological Museum*. Once it reaches Metković, the route heads south on the well-maintained trail alongside the river.

In passing by the historical town of Opuzen, **the route reaches its endpoint – the mouth of the Neretva River**, before turning back towards Vid along the right bank of the river, through the settlements of Komin and Kula Norinska.



THE HEART OF THE VALLEY

ROUTE LENGTH: **56,6 km**
 SURFACE: *paved*
 TOTAL CLIMB: **229m**
 TECHNICAL DIFFICULTY: **1/5**
 REQUIRED FITNESS LEVEL: **3/5**
 RECOMMENDED TYPE F BICYCLE: *trekking*
 TOURING TIME: **3h**





At the place where Vid stands today, there was once the ancient settlement of exceptional importance – **NARONA**. The local archaeological museum was named after this settlement, and is a must to visit due to the wealth of the collection and the fact that this is one of the rare collections in Europe that is on display in situ, at an authentic locality of a temple complex of the former Roman settlement.



NORTH- ERN CIRCLE

56,3 km

ROAD



The Neretva River divides ...



... dijeli popola, its valley roughly in half. In each half, there are many natural sights and cycling challenges to enjoy that are so different, that they each offer their own *set of experiences*, despite being #1valley.

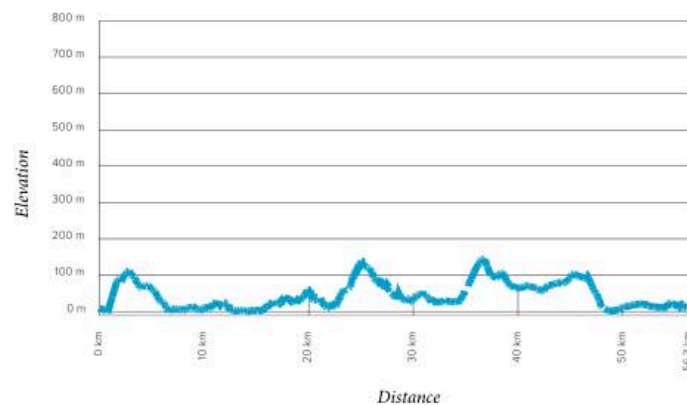
This circular road routes explores the northern half of the valley, and the best place to start is Kula Norinska, known for the large, preserved defensive tower that dates back to Ottoman times.

At the start of the route, an ascent awaits towards Desna, though the effort will be well rewarded with several more than spectacular viewpoints overlooking "Croatia's California".

After Desne, the route continues on towards Ploče, before heading across the Bačina Lakes and Peračko Blato to climb up towards the Polje Jezero field. However, this is not the end of the ascent; the final push is the one towards Mali Prolog, after which the route descends gently back to the starting point at Kula Norinska.

NORTHERN CIRCLE

ROUTE LENGTH: **56,3 km**
 SURFACE: *paved*
 TOTAL CLIMB: 772m
 TECHNICAL DIFFICULTY: 2/5
 REQUIRED FITNESS LEVEL: 2/5
 RECOMMENDED TYPE OF BICYCLE: *road*
 TOURING TIME: 2h





There are three longer ascents on the route, but the effort will pay off because they are followed by fantastic views over the Neretva Valley and the **POLJE JEZERO FIELD**.

Most of the route is on low traffic roads; however, caution is required near Ploče and Rogotin, since the route briefly comes out onto the D8 state road at those points.



NORTHERN CIRCLE



FIND OUT MORE
NORTHERN CIRCLE





SOUTH- ERN CIRCLE

66,1 km
ROAD



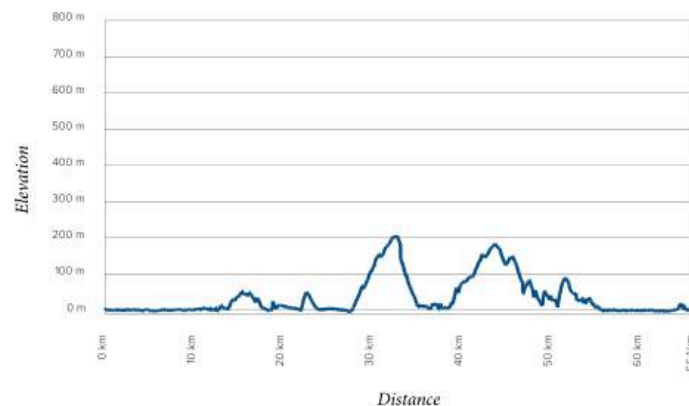
... part of the Neretva Valley, and is longer than its *northern sister*, with a land configuration that makes it a little more difficult. The route starts at Opuzen and continues along the banks of the Neretva to Metković. From there, the route heads towards Zažablje. The first large ascent is towards the settlement of Zavala Slivno, and along the way, don't forget to take in the beautiful **wetland vistas** of this part of the valley and the Kuti Lake ornithological reserve.

The effort in climbing has to be rewarded, and an attractive descent follows towards the Adriatic coast and the town of Klek, that looks upon the azure of the sea and the peaks of the Pelješac Peninsula to offer truly unique sights.

The final section of the route passes along the coast on the Adriatic Highway before turning off onto the local roads. It covers wavy terrain to reach Blace, known for its beautiful sandy beach. From the coastal town of Blace, near the mouth of the *Mala Neretva River*, the route leads you back along the main river course back towards Opuzen.

SOUTHERN CIRCLE

ROUTE LENGTH: **66,1 km**
 SURFACE: *paved*
 TOTAL CLIMB: **935 m**
 TECHNICAL DIFFICULTY: 3/5
 REQUIRED FITNESS LEVEL: 2/5
 RECOMMENDED TYPE OF BICYCLE: *road*
 TOURING TIME: **2:30 hours**





TIPS & TRICKS

After passing **MLINIŠTE**, you will come across a spectacular view of Kuti Lake and the southern part of the Neretva Delta.

Be carefully when descending towards Klek, as towards the end, the route joins out onto the D8 state road.



BIG CIRCLE

100,2 km

ROAD





... two smaller routes to form a full circuit around the entire Neretva Valley, and breaking that magical distance of 100 kilometres. Though this is a respectable distance, the 'large circle' is not considered a difficult route, at least for regular recreationalists who have achieved a certain level of cycling skill and physical fitness. The elevation difference is not excessive, and the distance of 100 kilometres should not be a problem for those who cycle regularly.

For beginners or less experienced cyclists, we recommend that before trying to take on the challenge of the entire circuit around the Neretva Valley on this route, that they first see how well they handle one of the shorter #1 valley road routes.

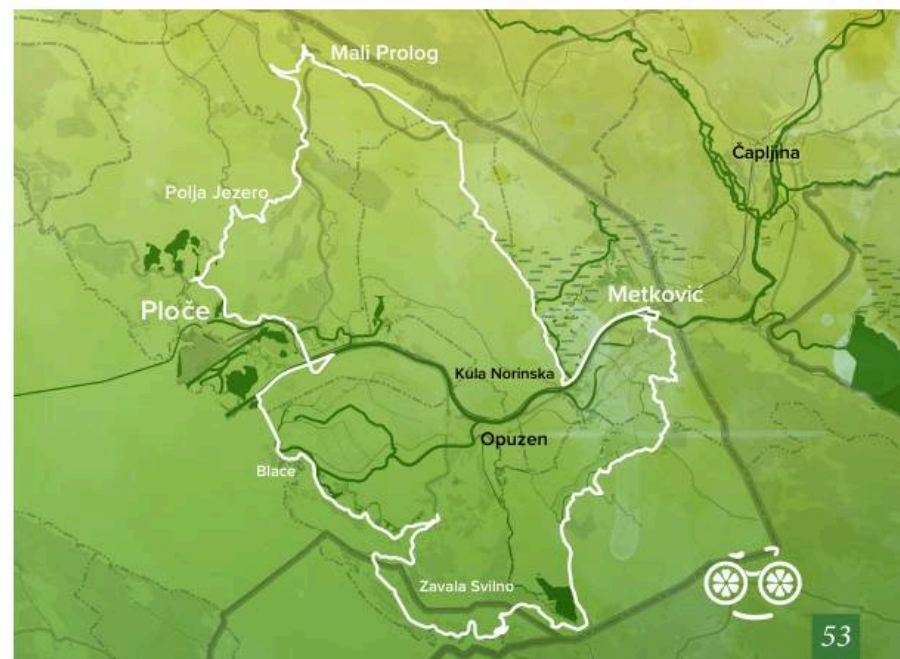
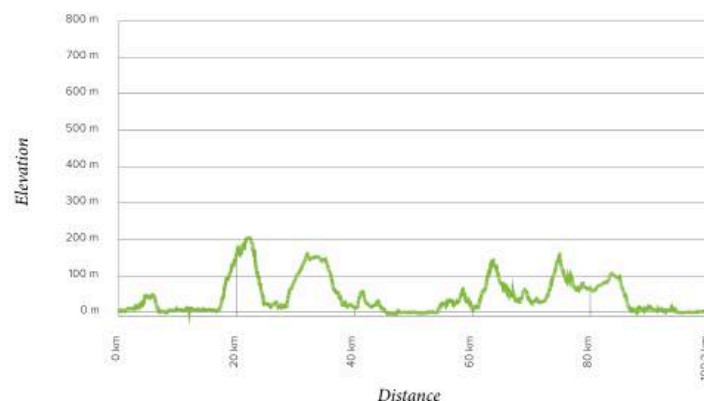
This route begins in **Metković** and heads through the lowlands towards Zažablje, where you can see the former *wetland landscape of the Neretva*, before starting the climb towards Zavala Slivno. Your efforts will be rewarded with a long descent towards the town of Klek, that offers a beautiful view of the sea and the **Pelješac Peninsula**.

After reaching Klek, the route heads along the **Adriatic highway** towards the mouth of the Neretva, which requires extra caution, especially during the high-traffic summer months. A particular attraction of this part of the route is the long, *sandy beach* in **Blace**. From here, the route turns towards Ploče, and then starts to climb up towards the natural phenomenon, the **Polje Jezero** karst field, created by drying out what was once Vrgorac Lake.

From Polje Jezero, the route continues to climb up towards **Mali Prolog**, before heading back downhill towards the Neretva at **Kula Norinska**, famous for the protective defensive tower that dates back to Ottoman times. After Kula Norinska, the route follows the banks of the Neretva back towards Metković.

BIG CIRCLE

ROUTE LENGTH: **100,2 km**
SURFACE: *paved*
TOTAL CLIMB: **1230m**
TECHNICAL COMPLEXITY: 3/5
REQUIRED FITNESS LEVEL: 3/5
RECOMMENDED BICYCLE TYPE: *road*
TOURING TIME: **4 hours**



TIPS TRICKS

This route is highly diverse, passing through all types of landscapes that you can find in the Neretva Valley: agricultural “canal” landscapes along the river, the karst greenery of Polje Jezero field, and the coastal roads in the Slivno municipality.



BIG CIRCLE

Most of the route is on secondary roads, though special caution is required at two points, where the route crosses the D8 state road.



FIND OUT MORE
BIG CIRCLE





OVER THE MOUNTAIN AND INTO THE SEA

107,1 km

ROAD



... #1valley cycling route, designed for riders who see their bikes as sport gear and who yearn for a challenge, a tough ride, and an exceptional feeling of accomplishment at the end of the day.

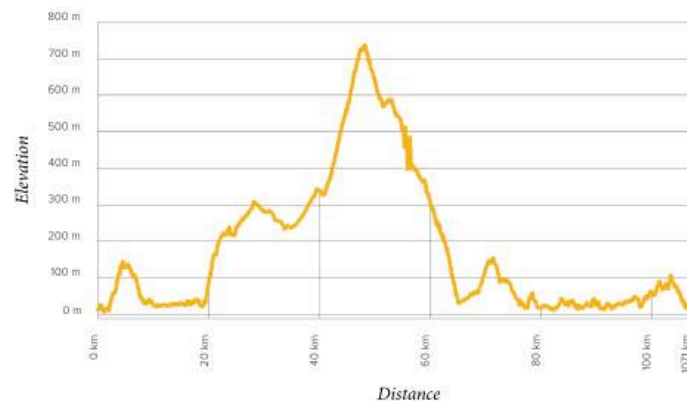
It starts in Ploče with a gentle climb towards the Polje Jezero field, a natural phenomenon created by drying out a former real lake. After a short descent towards the village of Staševica, the next elevation challenge begins towards the town of Vrgorac, at the northern edge of the field.

From Vrgorac, the route continues towards Kozice, and then a new climb follows along the edges of Biokovo Nature Park. **The mythical Mt. Biokovo is no piece of cake, though all the sweat and effort will be rewarded with one of the most beautiful cycling descents on the Adriatic coast, from the village of Gornji Igrani towards Podgora on the coast.**

This unbelievable vista of the azure Adriatic, the Dalmatian islands of Brač and Hvar, the peaks of the Pelješac Peninsula, and the thin green coastal line of the Makarska Riviera that is pressed beneath the mighty cliffs of Mt. Biokovo is truly breathtaking. The final leg of the route begins in Podgora, and follows the Adriatic Highway back towards Ploče.

OVER THE MOUNTAIN AND INTO THE SEA

ROUTE LENGTH: **107,1 km**
SURFACE: *paved*
TOTAL CLIMB: 1770m
TECHNICAL DIFFICULTY: 2/5
REQUIRED FITNESS LEVEL: 4/5
RECOMMENDED BICYCLE TYPE: *road*
TOURING TIME: *4 hours*





Ambitious cyclists in better physical condition can extend this route by climbing to the highest peak of Mt. Biokovo, **ST. GEORGE (SVETI JURA, 1762 METRES)**, on the highest elevation paved road in Croatia. After a few kilometres of descent from Gornji Igrani towards Podgora, you will pass by the entrance to Biokovo Nature Park, where the Biokovo road and your cycling challenge begins.

TIPS
TRICKS

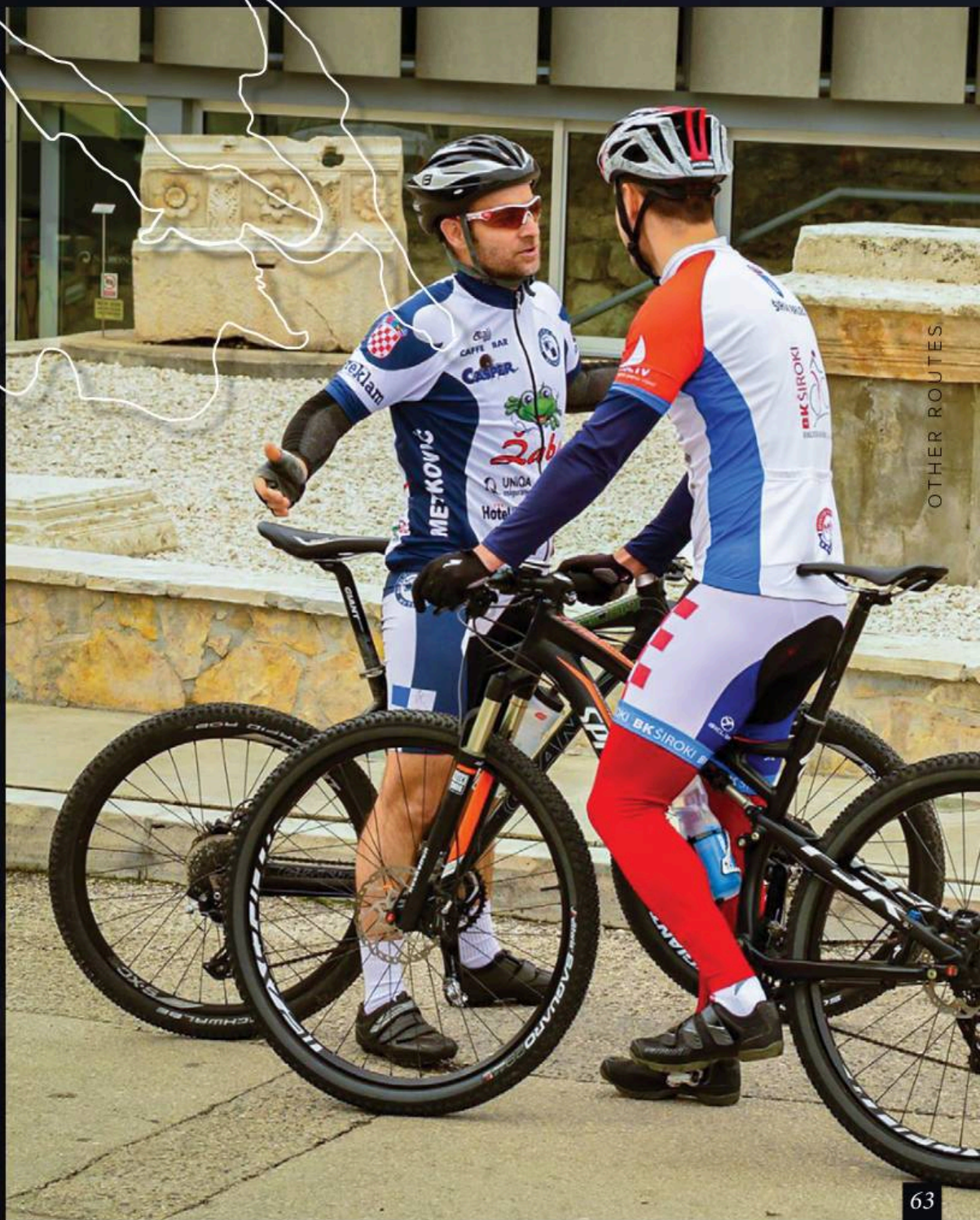
OTHER ROUTES

PASSING
THROUGH
THE NERETVA
VALLEY

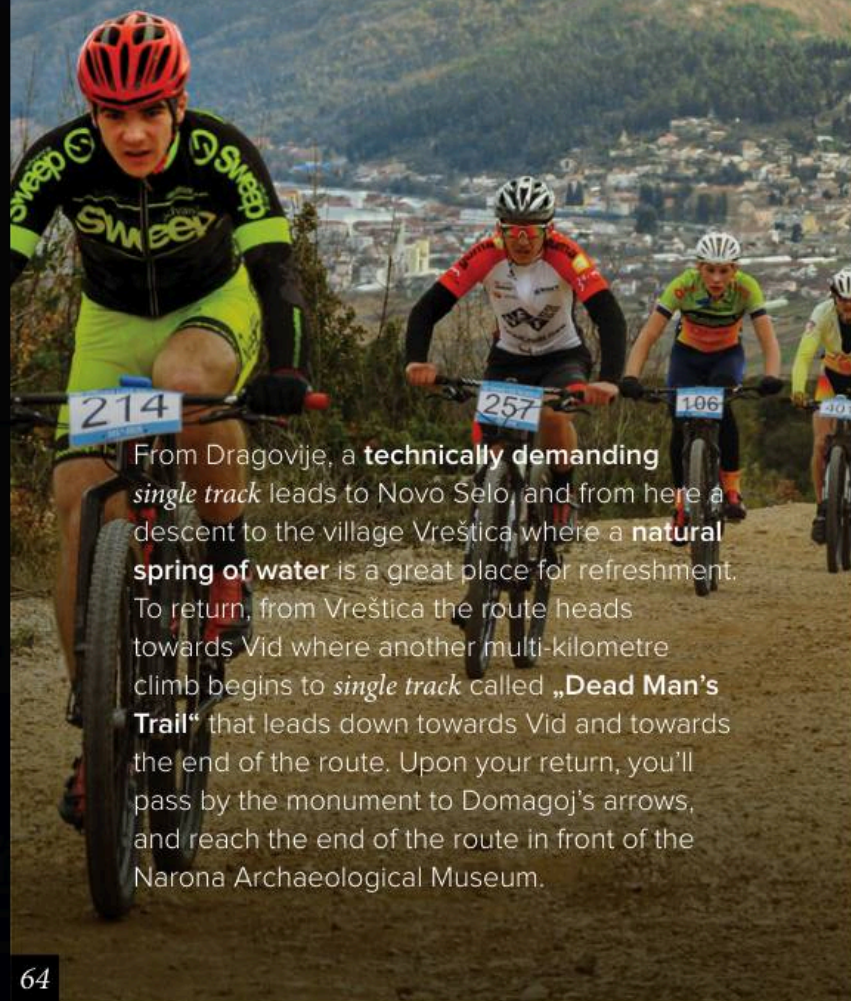
XCM RACE TRACK-
Stipe Čamber

POLJE JEZERO FIELD

EUROVELO 8



This is the route of the MTB marathon organised by the **Metković Cycling Club**. The route begins in the village of Vid, in front of *the Naronā Archaeological Museum*, and then continues on to Prud where the first multi-kilometre climb begins towards the village of Dragovije. The effort of the climb will be well rewarded with stunning views over the whole of the Neretva Valley.



From Dragovije, a **technically demanding single track** leads to Novo Selo, and from here a descent to the village Vreštica where a **natural spring of water** is a great place for refreshment. To return, from Vreštica the route heads towards Vid where another multi-kilometre climb begins to *single track* called „**Dead Man's Trail**“ that leads down towards Vid and towards the end of the route. Upon your return, you'll pass by the monument to Domagoj's arrows, and reach the end of the route in front of the Naronā Archaeological Museum.

XCM RACE TRACK- Stipe Camber

ROUTE LENGTH: **27 km**
SURFACE: gravel/earth/paved
TOTAL CLIMB: 680m
TECHNICAL DIFFICULTY: 3/5
REQUIRED FITNESS LEVEL: 3/5
RECOMMENDED BICYCLE TYPE: MTB
TOURING TIME: 2 hours



TIPS & TRICKS

IF YOU PLAN TO RIDE AFTER HEAVY RAIN – TAKE EXTRA CAUTION! The rocky downhill trail can be unpleasantly slippery, and erosion gullies may have formed.

At Vid, there are several shops to purchase food and drink, and about 14 kilometres along the route, there is a **NATURAL SPRING** where you can replenish your water supplies.

Pristine nature and a stunning view over the entire Neretva Valley, changes in elevation, and a combination of *sgravel trails and single tracks* are sure to attract experienced cyclists.



POLJE JEZERO FIELD

The **Polje Jezero** karst field is an interesting phenomenon created by human hands. Today, this fertile green field and its Matica River connects the northern part of the field and the town of Vrgorac with the southern edges of the town of Ploče in the south. **The field was created by drying out a natural lake to create agricultural conditions in this otherwise bare karst landscape.**

FIND OUT MORE
POLJE JEZERO FIELD



The drying process was made possible by the construction of a tunnel that **connects the field with the Baćina Lakes that lie above Ploče**. However, Polje Jezero is still a dynamic landscape, as the Matica River often overflows its banks in spring, especially at the far south of the field.

For cyclists, this *a true trekking heaven*, where you can enjoy a light ride through a maze of vineyards, orchards, rocky hills that were once islands in the lake, and the winding river course. **The route was designed on the basis of a “junction” principle, meaning that the rider shapes the route on their own, depending on the preferred distance and sights one wants to see.**

The trekking heaven in this case implies an excellent side offer of things to do, above all culinary, with the **large number of family farms (OPG)**. Since this is **Croatia’s largest wine-growing area**, and the homeland of the famous **Vrgorac prosciutto**, this should come as no surprise.



EUROVELO 8

The Mediterranean cycling route **EuroVelo 8**, passes right nearby, but unfortunately not through the Neretva Valley.

This is a route that is included as part of the *EuroVelo European network of bicycle touring routes*, rdeveloped by the **European Cycling Federation**. The Mediterranean route, called EV8, begins in Spain and runs for nearly **5900 km through 11 European countries** to reach its end (or beginning depending on perspective) on Cypress.

EuroVelo 8 touches upon the Neretva Valley in Ploče, but from here continues onto the Pelješac Peninsula and continues on towards Dubrovnik. However, considering that cycling tourism is dynamic and its participants are highly mobile, there is no reason why one should not explore some of the daily routes near this international cycling route when already here in the Neretva Valley, regardless of whether this is the **Makarska Riviera, Pelješac or even the Dubrovnik coastal area**.

FIND OUT MORE -
EUROVELO 8



WHAT TO SEE

Narona Archaeological Museum

Near Metković is the *ancient settlement of Narona*, and its history and former glory are on display at this contemporary museum that is unique because it was constructed at the actual location of the former temple complex of that settlement. The Narona Archaeological Museum is situated in **Vid, near Metković**, and contains a vast collection of statues and artefacts that bear witness to the history of this region, from antiquity to the medieval period.

Natural History Museum

Before the large amelioration works that reshaped the Neretva Valley into “*Croatia’s California*”, the entire valley looked very different. The branching wetland area was a challenge for the daily life of the local people, but a haven for **birds**. This biological wealth has been presented in the ornithology collection of the *Natural History Museum* housed in the centre of Metković. **With 340 items on display**, it is one of the largest collections of its kind in Europe. The museum contains specimens of 218 of the total 310 bird species recorded in the Neretva River, some of which, **like the Dalmatian pelican and the marbled duck**, are unfortunately no longer found in this area.

ORNITHOLOGY AND ICHTHYOLOGY RESERVE

“Neretva Delta”

The **Neretva Delta** is today an exceptionally diverse habitat that abounds in different species of plants and animals, especially birds, and there are five localities within the delta area that have been granted status of *an ornithological reserve*. The Neretva Delta is one of these. A total of **310 bird species** have been recorded in the Neretva Delta, making this an important stopover sight in the migration of wetland birds that winter here, and it comes as no surprise as this habitat is also an important feeding site.

If you love birds or have become curious about birds during your visit to the Neretva Valley, then we certainly recommend you take advantage of the diversity here, and spend a bit of your visit observing these fascinating creatures.

Kula Norinska

Constructed as an **Ottoman defensive structure** in the early 16th century at the mouth of the *Norin River* at where it drained into the Neretva at that time, this tower is one of the most impressive historical structures in the entire region. The tower was used for military purposes until the 19th century when it was transformed into a windmill. Today it is a protected cultural structure that cannot be missed if you are passing along the river.

Polje Jezero

Once a true lake, it was dried out in the mid-19th century to **create an agricultural area** in the otherwise barren karst landscape between Vrgorac and Ploče. The project was a success and today, the Polje Jezero karst field is a fertile plain that is proud to hold the status of Croatia’s largest wine-growing area. Its aquatic history continues to live on with the beautiful *Matica River* that snakes through the field.

THE LANDSCAPE OF THE VALLEY WAS **SHAPED BY THE NERETVA RIVER**. FOR MOST OF ITS **225 KM LONG COURSE** (OF WHICH ONLY THE FINAL 20 KM FLOW THROUGH CROATIA), IT IS A TYPICALLY FAST, STRONG MOUNTAIN RIVER THAT CHANGES ITS CHARACTER ONLY 30 KM BEFORE THE MOUTH, TRANSFORMING INTO A **CALMER WATERCOURSE** THAT CARRIES ACCUMULATED RIVER MATERIALS DOWNSTREAM, AND BRANCHES OUT INTO NUMEROUS ARMS AND LAKES TO FORM A DELTA.

Through the **gradual filling of the sunken karst depressions**, the Neretva has shaped the present-day landscape with more relief and morphological units. The most obvious is the **contrast between karst, hilly frame of the valley itself and the river lowland**.

Among the many karst phenomena, the **caves and pits** are particularly interesting. Some 50 structures are known, and some have been found to contain rare organisms such as the only known cave-dwelling mollusc in the world, a living fossil, *Congerius kuscieri*. In this same eternal darkness where this unique mollusc evolved, we also find the olm: an **endemic, gentle amphibian** with fragile legs and a cylindrical body with skin as pale as a human's. When the ground waters rise suddenly, it is occasionally cast out onto the surface.

Through continuous amelioration works, especially during the second half of the 20th century, the landscape of the Neretva Valley has been significantly altered, and the former wetland landscape with numerous bird and fish species has been transformed into a somewhat different, though no less interesting space of dried out wetlands and cultivated land in *"block"* form, dominated by contemporary, commercial crops.

THE NERETVA VALLEY HAS BEEN BLESSED WITH A MILD MEDITERRANEAN CLIMATE THAT HAS SOMETIMES BEEN CALLED AN **"OLIVE" CLIMATE**, WITH **HOT AND DRY** SUMMERS BUT WITH TRUE SEASONS. THE VALLEY IS SURROUNDED BY HILLS ON THREE SIDES, AND IS OPEN ONLY TOWARDS THE WEST AND SOUTH TO THE SEA, WHICH AFFECTS THE FORMATION OF SEVERAL MICROCLIMATE BELTS. THE LOCAL POPULATION WOULD SURE TO LOVE TO TELL YOU ALL ABOUT THIS.

There are no strong winds in the Neretva Valley, and the strongest air currents come from the east. The north, northeastern and eastern winds are called Bora, as elsewhere in the Croatian coastal regions, and this wind brings clear, sunny weather. The opposite wind, **the Jugo**, comes from the south and southeast, and brings clouds and rain. The western breeze in the summer is called **the Maestral**, and it brings fresh, sea air deep into the valley interior, and eases the hot and humid summers.

The Neretva summers are long, warm and dry, and the winters are mild and rainy.

The Neretva Valley receives an average of **2700 sunny hours per year**, and the mean annual temperature is 15.7°C. The coldest months are December, January and February, though temperatures rarely fall below freezing, which is typical for the Mediterranean climate.

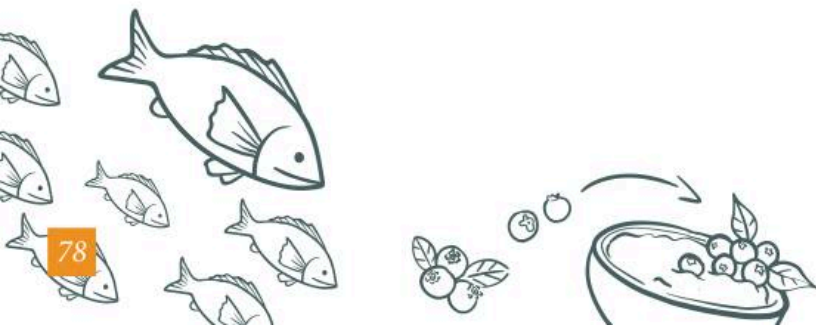
The hottest months are July and August, when the temperature can climb to 35°C or even 40°C. The average annual rainfall is 1300 mm, with most rain falling in winter. Fog is not a common occurrence, and snow is even rarer.

ENO GASTRO

WINE AND FOOD

The cuisine of the Neretva valley is as diverse as its landscape. Traditionally, the delicacies here are made with the **fish, frogs and eels caught in the clear, rich river waters, backwaters and lakes.**

This is also an important wine-growing area, and its agricultural production has made it "*Croatia's California*" with its excellent fertility and endless plantations of citrus trees and other Mediterranean fruits and vegetables in what seems to be a **heavenly garden**. You can be sure that after a challenging day of cycling, you will regain your strength with truly unique culinary delights.



ACCOMMODATION AND HOSPITALITY

Metković

Hotel MB

Matice Hrvatske 6,
20350 Metković
Phone: +385 (0)20 681 812
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Hotel Narona

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20350 Metković
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Hotel Metković

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Hostel Livia

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Web: hostel-livia.com

Hotel Narenta

Splitska 57/A, 20350 Metković
Phone: +385 (0)20 684 152
E-mail: narenta@danak.hr
Web: hotel-narenta.com

Restaurant - pansion "Đuda i Mate"

Velika riva 2, 20352 Vid
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GSM: +385 (0)91 187 63 64
E-mail: djudjaimate@gmail.com
Web: www.djudjaimate.hr

Kula Norinska

Boutique Rooms Kican

Splitska 82, Krvavac II.
GSM: +385 (0)91 372 00 27
E-mail: boutiqueroomskican@gmail.com
Web: kican.eu/en

Hotel-Restaurant Villa Neretva

Splitska 14, Krvavac II.
20350 Metković
Phone: +385 (0)20 672 200
GSM: +385 (0)98 361 700
E-mail: info@hotel-villa-neretva.com
Web: hotel-villa-neretva.com

Ploče

B&B

Hotel Tolero

Obala kralja Petra Krešimira IV 1,
20340 Ploče
GSM: +385 (0)95 349 41 03
E-mail: hoteltolero@foteinos.hr
Web: hoteltolero.com

Sagena

Mostina 16a, D8
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Phone: +385 (0)20 484 930
GSM: +385 (0)91 440 07 85
E-mail: info@sagena-rooms.hr
Web: sagena-rooms.hr

Restaurant Galeb

Gornja Bačina bb, D8
20340 Bačina
Phone: +385 (0)20 677 513

Monaco

Plinjanska ul. 63, D8
20340 Ploče
GSM: +385 (0)98 660 120
Phone: +385 (0)20 679 671
E-mail: info@restoranmonaco.com
Web: restoranmonaco.com

Caffe bar - Bistro M

Petrovac 2, D8 17
20343 Rogotin
Phone: +385 (0)20 689 149
E-mail: zdzderic@inet.hr

CAMPS

Auto kamp

Camping Homes Grot

Zavod 1, 20340 Bačina (D8)
GSM: +385 (0)98 219 061
E-mail: info@grotcampinghomes.com
Web: grotcampinghomes.com

Kamp u domaćinstvu

Camping Baćinska Jezera

Baćinska jezera 21, 20340 Bačina
GSM: +385 (0)97 767 91 12
E-mail: camping.bacinskajezer@gmail.com
Web: camping-bacinskajezer.com

Opuzen

Hotel Merlot

Podgradina bb, 20355 Opuzen

Apartment Sunce

Stanka Parmača 10
20355 Opuzen

Apartments „Dropulić“

Pinovac 21
20355 Opuzen

Apartment Family Čović

Jasenska ulica 43
20355 Opuzen

Apartments Šamić

Kneza Domagoja 2
20355 Opuzen

Grošovi Dvori

Celestina Medovića 1
20355 Opuzen

Apartment „Mihaljević“

Opuzenske bojne 7
20355 Opuzen

Holiday House – Dvori Vlahovici

Ante Starčevića 21
20355 Opuzen

Holiday House „Marica“

Bana Josipa Jelačića 44
20355 Opuzen

Holiday House „Galov“

Pržinovac 256/2
20355 Opuzen

CAMP

Auto-Camp RIO

Put Zlatinovca 23
20355 Opuzen

Apartments „Home Book“

Tisno 25
20355 Opuzen

Apartments Ivka

Trg kralja Tomislava 10
20355 Opuzen

Rest House ZEN

Pržinovac 31/3
20355 Opuzen

Guest House FOŠA

Ante Starčevića 1
20355 Opuzen

Villa Opuzen

Pramtrnovo 8
20355 Opuzen

Rest House „Antonija Gašo“

Ante Starčevića 1, 20355 Opuzen

MOTEL

Motel Delta

Fort Opus 1
20355 Opuzen



Restaurants

Restaurant Adria

Splitska ulica 48, 20350 Metković
Phone: +385 (0)20 684 391
Fax: +385 (0)20 684 391
E-mail: kontakt@adria-restaurant.hr
Web: www.adria-restaurant.hr

Restaurant - pansion „Đuđa i Mate“

Velika riva 2, 20352 Vid
Phone: +385 (0)20 687 500
Fax: +385 (0)20 687 440
E-mail: djudjaimate@gmail.com
Web: www.djudjaimate.hr

Hotel - restaurant „Villa Neretva“

Splitska 14,
Krvavac II
Phone: +385 (0)20 672 200
Fax: +385 (0)20 671 199
E-mail: info@hotel-villa-neretva.com
Web: www.hotel-villa-neretva.com

Industry Pub

Kralja Zvonimira 4,
20350 Metković
Phone: +385 (0)20 488 575

Agro etno park Žabac

Badžula
GSM: +385 99 665 0 665
E-mail: safari@zabac.info
Web: www.aep-zabac.com

Konoba Ponta

Splitska ulica 21, 20350 Metković
GSM: +385 (0)99 196 1955

Konoba Vrilo

Prud bb, Prud
Phone: +385 (0)20 687 138
E-mail: konoba.vrilo@gmail.com
Facebook: [konobavrilo](https://www.facebook.com/konobavrilo)

Bistro Metković

Oca Ante Gabrića 11,
20350 Metković
GSM: +385 (0)95 569 7078

Pizzeria Marino

Hrvatskih iseljenika 6,
20350 Metković
Phone: +385 (0)20 681 130

Pizzeria Milano

Sportska b.b., 20350 Metković
Phone: +385 (0)20 688 888

Restaurant Galeb

Gornja Bačina bb,
20340 Bačina
GSM: +385 (0)20 677 513
Road D8

Restaurant Baćinska Jezera

Put Malih Bara 6,
20340 Bačina
Road D8

Restaurant Fulin

Vladimira Nazora 45,
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GSM: +385 (0)91 570 14 07

Caffe bar - Bistro M

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Restaurant Monaco

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Web: restoranmonaco.com
Road D8

Konoba Jadran

Dalmatinska ulica 8,
20340 Ploče
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Pizzeria Oliva

Tina Ujevića 1, 20340 Ploče
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Kavana-grill Stara Dama

Obala Neretljanskih Gusara 4,
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Phone: +385 (0)20 687 627

Teta Olga

Mostina 7, 20343 Rogotin
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Road D8

Grill-Pizzeria Zminjac

Trg kralja Tomislava 26,
20340 Ploče
GSM: +385 (0)99 660 34 01
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Bistro-caffe bar Piazza

Vladimira Nazora 22,
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Mariner's Pub

Vladimira Nazora 49,
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Konoba Pod Maslinom

Poljanica Mate Pečića 3,
20355 Opuzen
vl. Suzana Mušan
GSM: +385 (0)91 799 56 77

Caffe & Pizzeria DELTA Opuzen

Jasenska ul. bb, 20355 Opuzen
Vl. Goran Grljušić
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Konoba Buđoni

Momići 51, Momići
20341 Kula Norinska
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Web: www.konoba-budjoni.com

Hotel-Restaurant Villa Neretva

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Web: hotel-villa-neretva.com

Caffe Grill Palma

Opuzenska ul. 6, 20355 Opuzen
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Restaurant Lopoč

Momići 24/1, 20341 Kula Norinska
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CYCLING CLUBS

Metković Cycling Club

Web: bkmetkovic.com
E-mail: bkmetkovic@gmail.com
GSM: +385 (0)99 825 6646

Relaks Cycling Club

Facebook: [biciklistickiklub.relaks](https://www.facebook.com/biciklistickiklub.relaks)
E-mail: bkrelaks@gmail.com
GSM: +385 (0)98 171 3636

BICYCLE SERVICE AND MAINTENANCE

Jarebica

Owner Antonio Kuran
Facebook: [Trgovina-Jarebica](https://www.facebook.com/trgovina-jarebica)
E-mail: jarebica.metkovic@yahoo.com
Tel: +385 (0)20 682 779
GSM: +385 (0)99 651 1111

Narona bike

Facebook: [naronabike](https://www.facebook.com/naronabike)
E-mail: naronabike@gmail.com
GSM: +385 (0)99 825 6646

BICYCLE RENTALS

Narona bike

Bicycle rentals and van transport with bicycle trailer

Facebook: [naronabike](https://www.facebook.com/naronabike)
E-mail: naronabike@gmail.com
GSM: +385 (0)99 825 6646

Neretva rent a bike

Facebook: [neretva.bike](https://www.facebook.com/neretva.bike)
E-mail: cro24all@gmail.com
GSM: +385 (0)91 568 7713

Fit 4ever

Owner Vedran Jurinović
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GSM: +385 (0)95 888 5478

Nextbike

Web: <http://www.nextbike.hr/hr/zagreb/>
E-mail: info@nextbike.hr
Tel: 01 777 6534

Paddle Surf Baćina (eMTB)

Baćinska jezera 1, 20340 Baćina
E-mail: info@paddlesurfcroatia.com
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Web: paddlesurfcroatia.com/rent



CONTACTS

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turisticka.zajednica.metkovic@du.t-com.hr
Web: www.tzmetkovic.hr

Opuzen Tourist Board

Trg kralja Tomislava 1, 20355 Opuzen
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Web: www.tz-opuzen.hr

Ploče Tourist Board

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Web: www.visitploce.com

Slivno Tourist Board

Plaža 1, 20355 Klek
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Email: info@tzo-slivno.hr
Web: www.tzo-slivno.hr

Municipality of Kula Norinska

Rujnička ulica 1, 20341 Kula Norinska
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Web: www.kulanorinska.hr

Municipality of Zazablje

Mlinište 24, 20353 Mlinište
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E-mail: opcina.zazablje@du.t-com.hr
Web: www.opcina-zazablje.hr

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Emergency number: **112**
Police: **192**
Emergency medical services: **194**
Firefighters: **193**
Roadside Assistance (HAK): **1987**
Highway conditions: **+385 (0)62 777 777**
General information: **18981**





Trail – Full Cycling Experience

Trail – Full Cycling Experience, a brand of the company SPOT d.o.o., is a one-stop shop for the development of cyclo-tourism destinations. Our diverse and experienced team of consultants, cyclists, marketing and promotion experts and content creators, photographers and videographers cover all aspects in the development of a specific region into a cyclo-tourism destination: from analysis of potential and existing resources, to designing and marking new routes, development of services, to education for stakeholders in the public and private sectors, creating promotional content and marketing, designing and organising events, and destination management.

Trail – Full Cycling Experience was created out of our passion for cycling, enjoying the great outdoors, and spending time with people who share these same passions. We have built all of our sporting, professional and tourism experience into this project, creating a complete package for the overall development of cyclo-tourism destinations. In terms of its structure and comprehensiveness, this concept is unique on the Croatian market.

Our methodology of developing cyclo-tourism destinations encompasses three areas: development of infrastructure, development of services, and branding and promotion.

Spot d.o.o.

Jalkovečka 116, 42000 Varaždin
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INFRASTRUCTURE

On the basis of detailed analysis of potential and existing resources, Trail designs, proposes and marks a network of routes adapted to the needs and demands of the European cyclo-tourism market. In analysing and proposing necessary infrastructure works, we are guided by a strong understanding of cyclist needs and wants, and the experiences of other, successful, European cyclo-tourism destinations.



BRANDING AND PROMOTION

To stand out among the masses, to have a voice that is heard and a story that attracts – this is the secret of the successful promotion of a tourism destination. Systematic, innovative, creative and premium designed promotions created by Trail is that voice among the masses. We create visual identity, produce premium quality photo and video materials, and conceive, develop content and manage digital and offline promotional campaigns.



DEVELOPMENT OF SERVICES

We know what cycling tourists need, want and expect, because we too spend every vacation and every free moment on two wheels. Our programme to stimulate the development of services is based on education, training and workshops for stakeholders in both the public and private sectors, so as to help them to recognise the services they should offer for cyclo-tourists to ensure that they are satisfied, will come back again, and recommend the destination to other cyclists. The education programme is modular, and specifically targeted to different groups of tourism and other service providers. The programme includes: training for cycle guides, education for accommodation and hospitality service providers, and support for the local community to more effectively accept and develop cyclo-tourism.





All content, layout, graphic design and photographs by:
Trail – Full Cycling Experience



*One Valley. One Sport.
Different Experiences.*

NERETVA VALLEY

cycling-neretva.com

