



SUSTAINABILITY PARK ISTRA

Help to create a sustainable rural development in Istra, Slovenia

1. What is the project about?

Sustainability Park Istra is a charity project in beautiful, but socially underprivileged inland Istria region. We work to revitalize abandoned countryside area and create a practical example of sustainable rural development.

- Our vision

Sustainability Park Istra is creating a space of cooperation and innovation, a supportive environment for research, education and active practice of sustainable development. It is forming a model of sustainability in practice with the involvement of competent individuals and organizations. This model will be transferable to other locations in Slovenia and abroad. The Park is growing from amazing potentials of the region in Istria along the border between Slovenia and Croatia.

- Our goals

- To help revitalize abandoned, vacant rural area.
- To create sustainable development in practice and to develop a model that can be replicated in other Slovenian and foreign regions.
- To offer our volunteers the experience of sustainable living, luxurious simplicity.
- To provide an open space, where each of us can contribute according to their abilities to create a better world.
- To bring out the hero in you.

- Our objectives

Our primary objective is to help the local community in our region. We support their sustainable ideas and activities such as eco farming, sustainable tourism and preservation of local natural and cultural heritage. We also start our own projects with the same focus. This typically includes helping with renovation of traditional stone houses and dry walls, picking local eco produce such as olives and grapes, cleaning overgrown terraces, helping the elderly, organizing clean-up actions, participating at local cultural events, etc. In 2016 we are finishing the renovation of old rectory next to the church in Hrvoji, several hundred years old and made of beautiful local stone. This is a volunteers' home and our project's headquarters. Just next to the house we also tend a hectare of organic permaculture garden.

You can get more information of our project on our webpage: www.parkistra.com/en



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To find out what is going on recently, you can check our blog: <http://parkistra.com/en/blog/>

2. Volunteering

- Why we ask for volunteers?

We help the locals to realize their sustainable ideas. We help eco farmers, support local small-scale tourism, help with renovation of local cultural monuments, support projects that preserve local traditions etc. We also start our own projects and invite locals and their organizations to join. To do all that we need many helping hands.

- Who are we looking for?

We are looking for volunteers, who have enthusiasm, motivation and will to learn. Our work is really diverse, so we do no search for specific profiles.

3. Area description and free time possibilities

- Where does it take place?

Our project takes place in Istra region, at the border between Slovenia and Croatia. Hrvoji is a small, almost empty village, about 1 hour drive with bus from the coastal town of Koper. You can find a Google Map on our webpage: <http://parkistra.com/en/contact/>

We live in a socially deprived border region. Villages here are mostly empty and falling apart, young people left to search for jobs elsewhere. But emptiness of our region has also its advantages. Natural and cultural heritage is amazing and beautifully preserved and our project is about keeping it that way.

Our surroundings, Istria, is a fine region to practise hiking, biking and climbing, as much in the mountainous inland as in the coast. Istria is one of the Europe's top locations for culinary experiences. In nearby village there is an excellent and cheap local truffles restaurant.

We live in a scarcely populated area with lots of pristine nature. Nearby there are numerous hidden waterfalls and pools where we like to swim. Adriatic coast with its many beaches is about 30-minute drive from us. Same distance from us are beautiful old church in Hrastovlje, Istrian thermal resort (Istarsketoplice) and historical hill-top villages of Grožnjan and Motovun, populated by artist communities.

About one hour drive from us are:

- The old Venetian towns of Piran and Rovinj.
- Town of Pula with its Roman structures, including the Arena and Forum.
- Škocjan and Postojna caves.



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Towns of Venezia, Ljubljana and Julian Alps with Triglav national park are 1.5 to 2 hours away.

4. Accommodation

- House for volunteers:

From 1st of May – 1st of November

Volunteers stay in centuries old traditional Istrian stone house that we completely renovated with help of our volunteers using natural materials. We have fifteen beds for volunteers and a nice piece of our property reserved for tents. EVS volunteers stays in a room for 2 with other EVS volunteer. If you want more privacy we suggest you to bring a tent. If you don't have it, we will try to provide one for you.

From 1st of November – 1st of May

In this time there is a low season and much less volunteers around. For this period we are moving to a smaller house, where we host up to 5 volunteers.

- What are the services we will provide for you:
 - We cook together three vegetarian meals and we have a communal fridge if you need to grab a snack between the meals.
 - There is electricity, water and kitchen.
 - Bathroom with showers and toilets.
 - You will get eco soap, toothpaste and shampoo at our place.
 - Blankets and sheets for your bed.
 - We have Wi-Fi and a computer that you can use.
 - We have a washing machine that you can use.
 - If you prefer to stay in a tent we have a tent we can borrow if you ask as in advance.
 - For our volunteers we organized charity discounts for some of Slovenia's most interesting activities, such are Soča Valley's rafting and canyoning and hiking in caves of Postojna and Škocjan.



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- What do you need to bring
 - Bring some **warm clothes** and **good shoes** for our trips. Do not forget your **swimming suit**.
 - We have 15 beds for volunteers inside the house. If you prefer more intimacy, you can bring your **own tent**. If you don't have one, we can provide a tent for you.
 - It is great if you can bring a **sleeping bag** and a **mat** (if you sleep in a tent).
 - It is good to bring a **spray for mosquitos**
 - It is useful to bring a **torch**.

5. Cultural aspect

Atmosphere here is international and relaxed. People from all over the world work together and share their knowledge. We have very good relationship with locals who accept and support us.

Our daily rhythm is:

- 7:15 - Wake-up call
- 7:30 - Breakfast
- 8:00 - Morning circle and work
- 13:00 - Lunch
- 19:00 - Dinner
- 20:00 - Events

We distribute daily tasks in the Morning Circle at 8.00, Mondays and Tuesdays are off. At that time we often travel to some of the highlights close to us.

In the free time after lunch and in the evenings we share with one another our knowledge, talents, sing by the bonfire, play social games, walk on the slack line, go swimming, climbing, play volleyball, read, watch movies and talk. You are welcome to share your talents, skills, stories...



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7. How to get to us

- **From Koper to Sustainability park Istra - Hrvoji**

- By bus

Our project is best reached from town of Koper, from where you can take a bus to us (Hrvoji). Bus schedules with more information about how to reach our place are available at <http://parkistra.com/en/contact/>

- By car

If you're coming from Koper, get off the highway at Bertoki and turn right at the roundabout. Follow the road uphill through Prade and Sv. Anton. Then keep driving down the winding road through the countryside, passing the village Poletiči and Galantiči. After Galantiči turn right and in a few kilometres you get to Butari. From here on the directions are the same as above, for arriving from Ljubljana.

To come from Koper by car you will need about 30 minutes.

- **From Ljubljana to Koper**

- By train and bus

If you are arriving from Ljubljana, you can take bus or train from Ljubljana main bus and train station (they are at the same place) to Koper.

Timetable for trains: <http://www.slo-zeleznice.si/en/>

Timetable for buses: <http://www.ap-ljubljana.si/en/>

- Carpooling

Fast and cheap option to come from Ljubljana to Koper is Slovenian carpooling website <https://prevoz.org> (registration is possible with existing Google account).

- By car

Hrvoji is a tiny village in Slovenian part of Istria on the border with Croatia. If you are arriving from Ljubljana get off the highway at exit Črni kal. After a few kilometres on the regional road turn left in the direction of Buzet, or border crossing Sočerga. When you get to Gračišče just drive through the village and 100 meters after the gas station turn right. Follow the road through villages Butari, Sirči and Belvedur. (Do not take the turn for Trebeše!) When you get



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to Hrvoji, turn immediately sharp right up the hill through the village and park to the right of the bell tower.

From Ljubljana you need a little less than an hour and a half.

- **By Plane**

- Arriving from Ljubljana

If you are arriving by plane there are many ways that you can get to Slovenia. One way to get to us is to fly to our capital Ljubljana. The international airport code is LJU. From airport to the main bus and train station in the centre of Ljubljana operates public bus service no.28 and runs about every hour. The journey takes 45 minutes, the cost is around 4 Euros and you buy your tickets directly from the driver. There is also a private shuttle service running less frequently but it's a bit faster.

- Arriving from Italy

The best (the cheapest, closest) would be to fly to Venice or Trieste.

- Arriving from Trieste

Between the Ronchi dei Legionari Airport (Trieste) and Slovenia there are the following connections:

By bus:

Ronchi dei Legionari Airport (Trieste) and Slovenia have a connection once a day; the bus from the airport to Koper leaves at 14.30 p.m. Another possibility is to take the APT number 51 from the airport to the city of Trieste. Several buses go from the station in Trieste to Slovenia each day.

Additional information can be found on the following web page: www.apggorizia.it

Bus Trieste - Koper:

6.00, 7.15, 9.00, 11.15, 12.30, 13.00, 14.00, 15.30, 17.15, 19.00

You can buy bus tickets from the airport-Trieste at the airport, and tickets from Trieste-Slovenia can be bought on the bus.

- Arriving from Venice

If you travel to Slovenia from the airport in Venice (Marco Polo), you will first have to go by bus to the railway station Mestre in Venice. The bus ATVO will get you there. The timetable can be found [HERE](#). Tickets can be bought on the bus.

Then at the railway station Mestre in Venice, find the train to Trieste (for additional information click [HERE](#)).

For getting from Trieste to Slovenia we suggest taking a bus (as described above). The bus



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and railway stations in Trieste are only separated by a road.

Transport services from Venice ad Trieste airports to Slovenia are also offered by the low-cost carrier GoOpti.

8. Weather and clothes

In summer (Jun, July, August): The temperatures average around 25C to 30C, but it can get up to 30C or 34C. It doesn't rain particularly often but expect some rain and its warm enough for you to swim in the sea. Eveninigs can be chilly, so bring also some worm clothes.

In autumn or in spring : You can expect temperatures of 10C/15C/ 20C. It can be sunny or cloudy, sometime foggy and windy or it might be raining. Really it's quite a mix of all the possibilities. You can see some wonderful sunny days but dull days, too.

In winter: The weather in the winter can be very changeable and diverse, day to day the temperature could be -1C, -2C or 0C, +5C.

9. Our contact

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10. Pictures from Park Istra

