

Cycle Scenic Slovenia

Routes/Maps/Download Gps Tracks

By

Anne & Mike Poe



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By Anne & Mike Poe

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Gratitude

There are so many people who gave 100% effort to help us solve problems that accompany any 5 month long journey. It seems inadequate to just say thank you. So, we will tell you a little about each one and what they did to make our travels fun and successful. We list them in order of appearance!

Gregor Pecnik, our BionX dealer in Ljubljana, had no idea we could create so many problems. We communicated with him by e-mail to begin the process of selecting and purchasing our BionX equipment. That went smoothly. Gregor was on top of every question as well as making excellent suggestions. The problems began when we missed our last flight leg into Ljubljana. He had to reschedule picking us up and installing the BionX parts. When we unpacked our bicycles, Mike's frame, front wheel and derailleur had been seriously crushed by the airline. Gregor took charge of getting everything fixed. My folding trike had a bunch of problems that Gregor waded through. The list went on. Once on the road, I overheated two motors and killed a battery. Gregor immediately took charge of getting everything replaced. BionX honored the warranty and acted quickly. The second time, Gregor drove to Croatia with the new parts. Thank you Gregor. We were lucky to have landed in your care! <http://www.ekoeko.si>

Bojan Selan I call him Magic Man. A friend of Gregor, Bojan has built his own amazing trike with electric motor. He is an inventor, entrepreneur, independent soul who offered a big helping hand in solving problems with my first trike and assisting Gregor at the drop of a hat. Hvala Bojan!

Marjan Zadnik heard about our efforts to secure the camping discount card for Slovenia. It was a complicated process for us to get one quickly. Marjan came to our lodging with card in hand. Personal delivery service! A couple of days later, he drove us to see Postojna Caves, an historic cave system, one of the largest in the world. Then, we stopped at his home where his wife had prepared a delicious traditional Slovenia meal. Then, he called a friend who could fix our computer which had just crashed. This is the kind of hospitality that became our experience of Slovenia. Caravan Club Slovenia: <http://www.ccs-si.com>

BionX Germany and Canada honored their business with their quick reaction to our parts problems. Several amazing moments occurred:

After the first motor stopped, BionX Germany sent us a new one, and another for Gregor to have in stock. <http://www.ridebionX.com>

When the monitor stopped working because of moisture, Francesco Olivo from their office near Munich came to the Munich train station to hand deliver a new one! We were in transit to Innsbruck, Austria and only had one hour at the station platform.

Andrew MacEachern, quality control in Canada, contacted us to ask exactly what happened when the motors stopped working. He had the wheels sent to him for inspection and quality control.

BionX upgraded my 20" wheel to 26" when I got my new trike.

Azub Trike: Milan Čtvrtník was in the front lines to get me a new trike. Production had been hampered by a recent factory fire, but he found a way to get me a new trike fast.

It was delivered straight to Gregor who installed the new parts and got us underway again. <http://www.Azub.eu>

Peter Osterversnik from Maribor came to our rescue when we couldn't get the bikes back into Slovenia to catch our flight home. We had inadvertently overstayed Shengen by 3 days and would not be allowed **back into Slovenia...at least by land. So, Peter drove to Croatia and picked up our bikes to care take them over the winter. Peter** is the Azub Trike dealer in Maribor, Slovenia. We had never met each other; just had e-mail about my new trike.

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Why Did We Choose PDF Format over Kindle or E-Pub

Wikipedia describes PDF as the following:

"Portable Document Format (PDF) is a file format used to present documents in a manner independent of application software, hardware, and operating systems. Each PDF file encapsulates a complete description of a fixed-layout flat document, including the text, fonts, graphics and other information needed to display it"

So what exactly does that mean to you, the user of PDF?

It does not matter if you have an Apple computer, Apple phone, or Ipad, a PC computer, an Android Table, or Android phone. A PDF file is readable on all devices.

If you rely on a Kindle (or Kindle app) for reading, it supports not only ebooks, but also PDFs. In fact, your Kindle (or Kindle app) has its own email address, meaning you can send any PDF straight to your device just by attaching it to an email.

The same can be said for E-Pub format which is the file format used by Barnes & Noble Nook Reader.

Kindles and Nooks are reflowable, meaning that the text can be fine-tuned to the demands of nearly any electronic reader or to the personal preferences of any human reader: typefaces can be changed, their size adjusted, and other attributes modified. The bottom line is these file formats work well with text because text can be easily manipulated and still remain coherent. The problem occurs with files that have a heavy concentration of images, charts, maps and other graphic content... like guide books!

We published two guide books in Kindle format because we believed exposing them on Amazon would reach a wider market. We have since taken the Kindle guide books out of Amazon. The only Kindle book we still have is our adventure story about cycling in Asia. It has many photos in it, which do not perform that well in a Kindle, but the majority of **the book is text...so it works.**

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That is why you will be reading this book in PDF format.

Introduction

Why Cycle Slovenia

Why is bicycling Slovenia so special? There are few, if any, dedicated bicycle paths like in Germany and Austria. There are no bicycle signs to follow. Cyclists must ride on regular roads with the cars and trucks. There are rarely shoulders for the cyclist. The country is mountainous and challenging to cycle. So why did it become our favorite country to cycle?

Many touring cyclists we met used Slovenia to get from the Adriatic coast to Poland, or Austria. They followed the major west-east auto freeway routes that connect the coast with Ljubljana and Maribor. How did they like it? "It was pleasant", they remarked, "but nothing really special"

They missed everything that Slovenia has to offer a touring cyclist:

- stunning, peaceful countryside
- spectacular Alps
- beautifully paved roads with hardly any traffic
- a host of suggested bicycle route maps available locally
- extremely courteous drivers who are happy to share the road with cyclists
- exceptionally friendly people many of whom speak excellent English
- delicious local food
- very pleasant accommodations and camping facilities
- wonderful, historic towns

By the time we left Slovenia, we had bicycled approximately 1200 km (745 mi), and still had not gotten as far east as Maribor. Obviously, there is more to go back to see and enjoy.

We made some circular routes as well as routes to Croatia and into Austria that we thought were not only spectacular, but included all of the pros mentioned above. Our goal is to share those routes with you and inspire you to think about bicycling Slovenia and discover the magic of this tiny country that most people just pass through.



Where is Slovenia?

Confused? Perhaps you have heard of Slovakia! That's the southern part of the former Czechoslovakia that is now two countries: Czech Republic and Slovakia. Or perhaps Slavonia? That is a region in the northeastern part of Croatia.

After WW II, Slovenia joined Yugoslavia as a republic but kept its distance from Moscow and communist rule. Eventually dissatisfied with Serb rule of Yugoslavia, in 1991, Slovenia succeeded in breaking away from Yugoslavia after a brief and almost uneventful 10 day war. Their historical ties to western Europe, a stable government and a strong economy brought them into the EU in 2004. Other peoples of Yugoslavia were not so lucky, suffering through the terrible Balkan Wars and ending up as 6 more separate countries: Serbia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Croatia.

A relatively small country, Slovenia fits closely the size of New Jersey or Connecticut. Slovenia has borders with Italy, Austria, Croatia, and Hungary. It is a member of the European Union and has also signed the Schengen Agreement (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schengen_Area). Their monetary unit is Euros. It has open borders with other EU countries, but not with Croatia, an EU country that has not signed the Schengen Agreement as of our date of travel.

What does all this mean to us as visitors? The EU and Schengen countries only allow 90 days for USA citizens to stay in all of their countries combined. That's 27 countries! Long distance touring cyclists who have an entire summer to travel must leave the EU, Schengen countries by 90 days after arrival. That is why Croatia, Romania and Bulgaria fit so well into a European long distance bicycle tour. They are not Schengen!

Small in size and confused with other similarly named countries Slovenia may be, but the country is very rich in hospitality, education, modernization, well developed historic sites, and our favorite...gorgeous scenery and back country roads for cycling.

Slovenia Maps & Info

We cycled the country with no more prior knowledge than a single road map and hearsay information that Slovenia was mountainous and had no signage or established bicycle routes such as in Austria and Germany. Basically, we choose back road routes that led to the best tourist sites and most rewarding scenery. After spending over a month cycling Slovenia, we gathered some of the sources you see below. Maps are indeed a bit difficult to find in the USA market, but there are many sources for maps once you get to Slovenia.

www.slovenia.info/cycling or www.hiking-biking-slovenia.com is a cycling in Slovenia-free map and booklet with cycling routes throughout Slovenia obtained through the Slovenian Tourist Bureau in Ljubljana city center. Excellent map and information with routes, tours, bicycling hotels. Be aware that the vast majority of routes are on difficult gravel and attract mountain bikes, not touring bikes. What you will find on this map is paved road suggestions that connect these mountain biking regions!

Guide Slovenia: Excellent travel book describing the best of Slovenia with lots of photos and maps. Available through Slovenian Tourist Bureau-Ljubljana. 10 Euros

National Geographic Slovenia 3311 Adventure Travel Map 1:205,000: Waterproof paper. No cycling routes but a good travel map; good readability. Available through Amazon.com USA

Geago Avtokarta 1:250,000: Slovenija is a laminated pullout map of the entire country with roads, hotels, camp sites, National Parks, castles and other excellent tourist sites.

www.Geago.si. We bought our map in Ljubljana at the Slovenian Tourist Office. 9 Euros.

Just about every historic town or tourist destination has local maps at the local information center. Many maps are specific to bicycling, although once again, they do not differentiate between gravel and paved, mountain bikes or touring bikes.



Dedicated Cycle Routes in Slovenia

Aside from the capital Ljubljana, there are really only a handful of dedicated paved bicycle touring routes in the entire country. That lends reason to why we did not see many touring cyclists in Slovenia. Folks simply are uncertain where to tour because there is so little information available. That is slowly changing as officials and locals see a rise of interest in cycle touring Slovenia.

Ljubljana itself, however, is the easiest capital city we have ever bicycled in. There are literally bicycle paths on every road within the city except the freeways. We found safe ways to exit the city in every direction.

Be mindful too, that these bicycle paths can take you safely to all the marvelous sites Ljubljana has to offer.



How to Use this Guide

The book is divided into 6 routes. Each route is then divided into stages. The stages were determined by how far we went each day along a certain route.

Routes A-D tour some of the more famous areas and locations in Slovenia.

Route E can get you from Slovenia to the Drava River Basin in Austria following an especially scenic route.

Route F is the route we chose to go from Ljubljana to the Islands of the Croatian Coast. There is no easy way; they all go through big climbs. This route is quiet and scenic.

Route pages are color coded for ease of research. For instance, Route A has purple headings; route C has orange headings.

Every route has its own summary map; every stage has a map as well.

The maps in the pages of the PDF can be enlarged for detail by magnifying each page. The maps are not interactive however. That is why we also offer you, the purchaser of this book, password access to our Buyers page on our website. From this page, you can view and download all or any of the maps and GPX files and save them to your computer.

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5. Choose the associated country from the drop down list. (ie Slovenia Instructions for Downloads)
6. You will be prompted to enter the password again. This gives you access to all the route files A-F for Slovenia.
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Once you have the pages open, scroll through the maps. Every map is "live", meaning you can magnify and move around the map to see the detail. Visit these pages as often as you wish. Bookmark them so you can use them for research.

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1. Click the download button at the bottom of each map you wish to save
2. Save to your computer. We have a file under documents called My GPX files
3. You can now upload these files to your GPS device by connecting the provided cable. Every GPS is different so you will have to follow the device instructions from here
4. To upload to your android phone or tablet:
5. We recommend getting the app GPX Viewer for your Android devices as that is the same developer as the maps. Once the app is installed, e-mail yourself the GPX file as an attachment. When you open the attachment from your phone or tablet, GPX Viewer takes it from there. The track will appear on the map in your device. Now, when you arrive in Slovenia, you have all the tracks in your hand

Our Equipment

We added Electric Pedal Assist to our Bikes

Why we Decided to Electrify

A little explanation is in order here. This book is all about cycling Slovenia. Why? because undiscovered Slovenia deserves singular attention as a destination cycle country and it is our goal to fill in some of the blanks. Yet, our tour in 2015 took us 4000 kilometers through 6 different countries for 5 months of travel. Slovenia was part of this long tour.

If you have read any of the pages in our website, <http://www.hikingbikingadventures.com> you have seen that we have often chosen to pursue challenging "holidays". The website stories start in 1984, our very first adventure, when we bicycled from Costa Rica to Peru and tried to bike through the infamous Darien Gap of Panama.

Thirty-one years and multiple adventure holidays later, we are now both in our 70's. Mike read about a study done on marathon runners that showed their race time declined by 20% every decade after the age of 40. We may still have the mental desire to meet the challenges and go the distances of our former years, we just don't seem to get there! Age has made a difference.

Last summer, 2014, we bicycled 4000 kilometers around Europe with full luggage and no electric assist. Stories are posted in our BLOG and under BICYCLING ADVENTURES on our website. There were days, even weeks, we wondered what we were doing there. In the United States, gradients on paved major and even minor roads rarely get steeper than 8%. In Europe, we constantly struggled up 10% to 15% gradients with many very short but very tiring gradients that registered up to 26% on our GPS. Eventually, we changed our itinerary and followed the Euro Velo 6 route along major rivers. There were still plenty of big hills, but it was a much easier route than where we had started in Greece and Croatia. Even though we wanted to continue our original route, the challenge was too much for us to enjoy.

I was born with a genetic form of emphysema. At my current age of 71 years, of the oxygen I take in, only 37% gets into my blood stream. Normal, healthy lungs in my age group pass between 70% to 80% oxygen from the lungs to the blood.

Without adequate oxygen to my blood, my heart wants to pump harder to compensate. Breathing gets short and stressed. My only choice is to go slow, especially uphill. My average speed going up a 6 mile hill with 10% gradient was about 2 miles per hour and less. At times, my breathing would become very labored and I would have to stop and recover. I was not having fun.

Because of my compromised lungs, Mike carried more of the luggage. He had a fully loaded bike and pulled a Bob's trailer. Often, on long up hills, if he stopped to rest, he could not get started again and ended up pushing to a flatter spot or to the top. He got tired of pulling such a burden on a daily basis and lost his desire to cycle in the mountains. He was not having fun.

We prefer to cycle in the mountains. We did not want to give that up, but neither were we up to the extreme challenge anymore. Something had to change, or we might had given up hope of ever enjoying independent, long distance touring again.

E-bikes are a relatively new concept in America, but they are extremely popular in Europe. Last summer when we were riding, we saw many people riding with electric assist. One must pedal in order to engage the assisting power. It has been described as bicycling with a tailwind. We decided if they could do it, we could do it and began a laborious search into the fast growing field of E-bikes.

Purpose Built E-bikes

This market is expanding so fast that whatever I write here will probably be out of date by the time you read it. We have found a lot of purpose built e-bikes to choose from.

Purpose built bikes come in three flavors: Front Drive, Mid-Drive and Hub. This site compares the systems: <http://electricbikereport.com/electric-bike-motor-comparison/>

Purpose built e-bikes are necessarily more expensive than adding a kit to your existing bike. Think of it this way. With a purpose built bike, you are buying a bicycle and a motorized system. How much did you spend on your existing bike? Are you into quality components or satisfied with the average? What kind of frame do you have? Why? Does your current bike fit you well? Do you like it? When you buy a purpose built bike, first you must pay to get the same quality bike you already have or want. Then, you pay for the motor. A high end motor that has a chance of giving you the distance you want is expensive by itself. A purpose built bike may split the costs between bike components and motor quality in order to keep the price competitive.

One more thing to keep in mind about a purpose built is that the distance you can go is relative to battery size as well as motor. To design a big battery into a frame means the longer distance you want to go, the bigger the frame configuration. Take a look at this website and you will understand what I am saying: <https://www.electricbike.com/purpose-built-frames/>

Research Resources

<https://www.electricbike.com/>

<http://electricbikereport.com/>

<http://www.nycewheels.com/bikes.html>

<http://ridebionx.com/products/oem/oem-customers/> is a list of manufacturers who build E-bikes with BionX system.

Add on E-bike kits

The add on market offers the same three types of systems as do the purpose built bikes: : <http://electricbikereport.com/electric-bike-motor-comparison/>

Research Resources

<http://electricbikereview.com/tag/kits/>

<http://electricbikereport.com/electric-bike-kit/>

<http://www.bikeradar.com/gear/article/buyers-guide-to-electric-bike-kits-30175/>

<http://www.nycewheels.com/electric-bicycle-conversion.html>

<https://www.electricbike.com/bafang-bbso2-750w-mid-drive/>

<https://www.electricbike.com/mid-drive-kits/>

<http://ridekick.com/electric-bike-conversion/>

Our bikes

Mike rides a Novara Safari from REI. This is the same bike that he rode last year in Europe. It is 2014 model that has a 26 inch wheel and rim brakes. REI has a new model out in 2015 that has a 29 inch wheel with disc brakes and cost \$200 more. Mike was very satisfied with the performance of his bike last summer. He had no issues using the rim **brakes even though he was pulling a heavy Bob's Trailer and had panniers on his bike. We ascended and descended long and extremely steep hills.** As far as he was concerned, there were no issues with the bike.

I rode two different trikes over the course of the summer. I started with an Edge E2 folding trike similar to the one I rode last summer. This trike was built up from a prototype frame with added improved production parts that resulted from feedback on the original prototype. All wheels were 16 inch. In the meantime, E2 as a company had dissolved over the end of 2014. They have since restructured and resurrected as <http://www.evolutetrikes.com/index.html>. But the engineer for E2, Bill Gillette, separated from the company and has continued developing a trike in his own manner and is helping us with this new one.

In July, I switched to Azub TRIcon trike (<http://azub.eu/>) with 26 inch rear wheel manufactured in the Czech Republic. Specifically designed as a touring trike with all the amenities, it was a workhorse. More about why I switched later.

Since we had our own bikes with the components and fit we liked, we chose to put money into the motorized kit as an add-on instead of buying a purpose built e-bike.

Bionx-Our Final Choice

Who is BionX?

The best description of BionX is on their own company website: <http://ridebionx.com/company/about-bionx/>

Their home base in Aurora, Ontario Canada houses their sales, service, research and production facilities. Over ten years in the business of building electric drive systems, they have earned a reputation for quality (<http://ridebionx.com/company/awards/>) that translated into confidence from our viewpoint.

In further researching BionX, we found retailers all around the world and a major service center in Germany. Since we were planning to bicycle in Europe, their worldwide presence was a big plus.

BionX is a pedelec system. That means that assist is available only when pedaling. BionX electric drive systems consist of three components: motor, battery, and console (<http://ridebionx.com/technology/our-technology/>).

BionX motors are built into the rear wheel so the rear wheels on our bikes are removed and replaced with their motorized wheel. There is a wide variety of motor size, meaning watts, and wheel sizes offered, although there is no system available for 16 inch wheels. All the motors are capable of regenerative braking which definitely helps to go longer distances. There are four levels of assistance from which to choose. Changing back and forth is immediately effective.

The battery packs are Li-ion and also come in a variety of sizes (voltage and Amps) and shapes such as rear rack configurations or down tube mounting. They can be charged on or off the bike.

The console is the computer brains of the system. It is programmable to meet rider specific needs and choices. It has all the information the rider wants to know about battery consumption, assist levels, distance traveled, speed. In addition, it is a diagnostic tool for the company to troubleshoot any problems. The consoles mount directly on the handlebar which makes changing levels of assistance very simple. External wiring connects all the components.

Our needs were quite specific. We wanted the most powerful motor, the longest lasting battery available on the market. The BionX new D series 500 watt motor and 555 watt battery had the strongest specs at the time: <http://ridebionx.com/>. That's what we decided to buy.

Taking an E-bike to Europe

It was our intention to buy our BionX **systems in the USA, have everything installed, and take our bikes with us on the airlines as we have always done. But, it's a** complicated issue to take an e-bike to Europe. The problem lies in getting the battery, which is a lithium ion product and henceforth considered dangerous goods, to Europe. There is only one way that these batteries can be transported. That is by ship. UPS, FedEx, special cargo planes, etc. will not fly a lithium ion battery that is as large as one used on an electric bike. If one prepares in advance, it is possible to ship the batteries, of course, by sea in plenty of time to get them by the time you arrive by air. We did not have the luxury of that time. We started developing the idea to convert to e-bikes too late in the season to consider shipping by sea.

The result of a great deal of research was that we decided to take the bikes on the airplane with us as we normally do and buy the electric motor kits in Europe. That involved extra expense, as a VAT tax of 20% is normal for buying goods in Europe. Plus, the prices of goods in Europe, with the Euro still stronger than the dollar, would be higher than if we bought the motors in the United States. But that was our decision, because we did not have time to ship the bikes by sea. In retrospect, if you live in the States and are traveling to Europe to cycle, we would recommend buying your BionX system in America and shipping the batteries ahead of time. Why?

The BionX products we wanted to buy are not available in Europe. Because of different laws (of which we were unaware) governing watts and speed between America and Europe, the products that were available were different. The kits that are offered in Europe are legally allowed a top speed of 15 mph (25 km/hr), and 250 watt battery where as in the States the limit is 20 mph (32 km/h), and 750 watt battery.

Installation

We found plenty of websites suggesting that you could install the BionX kit yourself and save \$. But, we are here to say, it is much more complicated than these sites leave you to believe.

The wheel needs to be set onto your existing axle in a specific manner or the motor will not receive correct information from the pedals.

The monitors have numerous settings that control battery usage vs. power received relative to miles per hour. These settings are adjusted via special computer software provided to BionX dealers, not to the general public.

The wiring is pretty straight forward but you need the correct lengths.

We are as far from being techies as two old people can be. The cost to install was about \$100 and well worth the price.

We were landing in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Specifically because we wanted to cycle much of Slovenia, but especially because there was a BionX dealer in Ljubljana where we could purchase and have the products installed.

We communicated with Gregor Pecnik, BionX dealer and owner of Absolut by e-mail ([website is www.ekoeko.si](http://www.ekoeko.si)) He was extremely helpful and devoted to helping us chose the best products we could get in Europe and install them. His knowledge of the BionX systems is extensive. He was careful to explain everything to us before we purchased.



Mike's bike was quite easy to retrofit with the BionX kit. His 26 inch wheel would be replaced by a 26 inch wheel with the hub motor built in. The battery was designed to fit on his down tube.

Mike got the BionX D-250 DV kit (Not the D-500 available in the USA)

Motor: 250 Watts

- Range: 135 KM
- Battery: Li-Ion / 48V / 11.6 Ah / 555 Wh
- Torque (Nom./Max.): 25.0/50.0 Nm
- Weight (System): 7.8 kg
- Assist Levels: 35, 75, 150, 300%
- Cassette body: Compatible with 9/10 speed cassettes from Shimano and SRAM
- Wheel sizes: 29er/28" (for disc brake, rim brake) 27,5" and 26" (for disc brake)

\$2270 US dollars



My trike was another matter. BionX did not make a motorized wheel for 16 inches. Their smallest wheel was 20 inches. This is where Bill Gillette stepped in. In his bike shop, he had manufactured dropouts that would support a 20 inch wheel. He made other adjustments to the trike so that it could be motorized and still fold properly.

I chose the S series 350 watt motor for the E2, but that was not available in the European market. So, I got BionX P-250-DV for 20 inch wheel

Motor: 250 Watts

- **Range: 135 km**
- **Battery: Li-Ion / 48V / 11.6 Ah / 555 Wh**
- **Torque (Nom./Max.): 9.0/40.0 Nm**
- **Weight (System): 8.5 kg**
- **Assist Levels: 35, 75, 150, 300%**
- **Cassette body: Compatible with 9/10 speed cassettes from Shimano and SRAM**
- **Wheel sizes: 20", 24", 26", 28" (for disc brake, rim brake)**

\$1980 US dollars



A normal installation would take a day. We cannot possibly mention here all the events that occurred to delay us for about two weeks. Everything Gregor and BionX promised and delivered was prepared and ready to go. For starters, Mike's bike arrived significantly crushed and Gregor took charge of obtaining and installing replacement parts. The 20 inch dropouts for my trike had still not been sent. That held us up at least a week. We could not mount the battery on the main tube of the trike because my legs were too short and there was not enough space. Gregor had to design a battery holder that would go below the seat and still allow the trike to fold. The folding rear wheel on the trike was damaged; we welded it permanently. The list went on. If, and we hope when, you travel to Slovenia, you will encounter one strong characteristic everywhere. The local people are always looking to help; they always offer a solution. Gregor had no idea we could create so many problems, nor did we really, but he provided a helping hand at every twist and turn. We consider ourselves exceptionally lucky to have landed in Gregor's care.

How Far Can You Really Go on a Single Battery Charge

We have read numerous accounts by e-bike enthusiasts as well as by those who find it bothersome to rely on charging a battery to go long distances. At this stage of development, the principle E-bike target market is the commuter who has a defined distance in mind and easy access to power for recharging. Another fast developing target market is the mountain bike population. In all the advertizing, not one manufacturer mentioned e-bikes or e-bike kits specifically designed for long distance touring. We did, however, come across this site with numerous fascinating stories told by e-bike long distance touring cyclists: <http://electricbikereport.com/passing-the-10000-km-mark-on-irelands-wild-atlantic-way/#more-18688>

Long distance is the issue here if you want e-bike assistance for touring. How far you want to go, or need to go in a day is, of course, personal. We meet two types of touring cyclists when we tour: Those who carry their luggage, and those who join a tour and the support vehicle carries the luggage. Both groups, it is probably fair to say, plan to go between 40 and 60 miles per day. Many do go much farther than that. Determining how far you can really go on any e-bike is a complicated issue.

When a company lists the distance you can pedal on a single charge, like car manufacturers, they post their highest distance based on perfect conditions. For an e-bicycle, that means using 1st power on a flat road of smooth quality and no wind. Then, add the weight of the bike, the rider, and of course any luggage. Since such perfect conditions really do not exist, it is very difficult to determine how far you can really go on one charge in a day, no matter whose product you purchased.

Other important parameters that affect total distance in a day is the type, wattage, and voltage of the battery. Here is a link to a site that explains what is important when choosing a battery: <http://electricbikereport.com/electric-bike-battery-basics-what-are-these-volts-amp-hours/>

Most e-bikes systems have four assist levels. Obviously, the more assist you require, the faster the battery discharges. Levels 3 & 4 consume about twice the energy of levels 1 & 2.

Some systems offer a recharging mechanism by "braking with the motor" on long or steep down hills.

Motors can be set to assist at different percentages within certain miles per hour. That alters how far you can go.

How you pedal, the cadence and amount of force applied to the pedals affects battery life. Starting from a stop in a higher power consumes energy while using your own leg power to get started saves battery power. Think about that every time you stop, or even slow down. Hard to measure this on a daily basis.

How Far Did We go on a Single Charge?

Now, you can begin to see how complicated it is to say how far can you go on a single charge. What we can offer you is based on our experience. We kept a log of battery usage...not everyday...but often enough and in different circumstances to see an average daily distance. But, you must remember all those imperfect conditions that jostled the figures every day. Good paving, bad paving, head wind, tail wind, side wind, gradient, weight of riders and luggage, weight of bicycles, monitor settings, and yes, cadence.

Mike: 190 pounds; bike with motorized system: 47 pounds; luggage carried: 50 pounds plus groceries as needed.

Anne: 140 pounds; bike with motorized system 57 pounds; luggage carried: 45 pounds

We both had our motors set to assist at a higher percentage from 0 to 10 mph. We wanted more assist for the steeper gradients which obviously we ascended at lower speeds.

Our single biggest day,

We went 48 miles and climbed 2400 feet.

We stayed in 2 power for most of the climbing.

My uphill speed at 10% to 14% gradient averaged 4 miles per hour, double what I was able to do without a motor assist.

Most importantly, my blood oxygen did not drop and my breathing remained steady.

We used regenerative power on down hills and arrived at camp with no battery charge left.

An average day seems to compute to 36 to 40 miles with no major passes but plenty of hills. We used 2 and 3 power and had a smile on all day long. Fun was our goal, not conservation. If we wanted to charge up a hill, we put the motor in 3 and pedaled as hard as we could. Sometimes we arrived at camp with one or two battery bars remaining. Other days, we charged for one hour while eating lunch just to insure arriving at our chosen destination without needing to be conservative. We reached all the daily distances recorded in this book. Only 4 times did we recharge at lunch just to be cautious.

Our Assessment of BionX E-bike System

Mike's D Series 250 DV system

In summary, Mike's experience with the D Series motor, even though he got the 250 watt system instead of the 500 watt because we purchased the kit in Europe, was largely a great success. With his weight and the luggage he carried, the D Series power and torque responded immediately to his strong pedaling ability and high cadence. He does not like to linger on hills; he wants to get to the top. Before he had a motorized system, he would always charge the hill ascending as far as he could before he tired. He used accumulated momentum from the descent to propel him upwards. With the BionX motor, he still charged up the hill. He flew! At first, he used a lot of three power, then, as he became stronger, he was able to get the same result using 2 power. Because of the regenerative system, he descended at lower speeds in order to recharge the battery, thus saving his own energy. The big difference was that he did not tire so quickly...and he had fun!

Another big plus was that he was able to get started again if he stopped on a steep hill. The motor gave him a "turbo boost" from a dead stop on a steep gradient. Sure, it used more battery power, but last year, if he stopped like that, he had to push to the top because he could not get started again on such a steep gradient with so much luggage.

He experience two equipment problems during the 4000 kilometers we cycled around Europe. After riding in a heavy rain, the monitor collected moisture. It never really cleared up and after a second heavy rain, the monitor completely died. That rendered the system unusable. We needed a new monitor. Replacing a part is done through the dealer. Gregor contacted BionX in Germany and made the claim. The problem was, how do we get the monitor? Gregor was in Slovenia; we were in Prague. The monitor needed to be programmed and only a dealer had the software to do it. We had only a few days left to stay in the EU Shengen countries and had to get to Croatia, a non-Shengen country. We would take the train to Innsbruck, Austria and cycle to Croatia from there. Gregor found a dealer in Innsbruck who could program the monitor for us. Would BionX Germany send the monitor to Innsbruck?

What happened next was rather unbelievable. They could not expedite the package to Innsbruck in time for our arrival. We had a train change in Munich, Germany...very close to their BionX service center. **A representative from BionX, thank you Francesco, came to the Munich train station, found us and handed us the new monitor! That's service!**

Mike's second problem began shortly after the monitor issue. Mike noticed a lack of power assist...until he hit bumps in the road. Suddenly, the bike would surge ahead. Gregor identified the problem immediately. Mike's wheel nuts had loosened over time. The BionX wheel had rotated into an incorrect position and communication between the pedals and the motor was "garbled". A "bump" message got through, but pedaling did not. Gregor gave us instructions how to reset the wheel in the proper position. Technically speaking, we didn't "get it" until he drew lines on a picture we sent him of the wheel position. Once understood, it was simple to correct ourselves. But Gregor warned us to tighten the nuts very tight. We thought we did, but our small tool set did not offer enough torque to hold the wheel firmly in position. After three recurring episodes, a Swiss traveler came to the rescue with a big torque wrench. That fixed it.

Anne's P 250 DV BionX system

The P series motor Anne used on her 20 inch wheel was more problematic. **The P motor has 9 Nm torque.** Mike's D series **motor has 25 Nm which is 2.5 times higher torque.** Ascending steep gradients with luggage apparently overheated **Anne's P 250 motor.** Over the course of about 500 kilometers, Anne burned out two P 250 DV motors. They died an instant death after spinning on loose gravel. Although Gregor and BionX responded immediately to the situation, it took days to get the new wheels. The first time, we rented a car and drove back to Ljubljana. The second time, Gregor drove to us in Croatia. When the second replacement motor began to show signs of overheating, we decided the P Series with 20 inch wheel was not suitable for our kind of travel through mountains with heavy luggage.

That's when we began the search for a new trike with 26 inch wheel. BionX would upgrade us to a D-Series motor. With Gregor's knowledge, and a lot of dedicated people at Azub Trike company in the Czech Republic, we secured a new trike with 26 inch wheel and a new BionX D Series motor. That ended all Anne's problems. No more overheating. Just a lot of power to get up those 14% gradients. And her new Azub TRIcon trike was like pedaling a Cadillac.

A short time later, we received an e-mail from BionX quality control manager in Canada. He asked if we would report the exact circumstances of each motor failure. The wheels were being shipped back to Canada for analysis.

Mike and I remember years ago when we were distributors for a white water kayak company. We reported water filling the support tubes in the kayaks and in the paddle. As distributors, we expected our reports to be extremely helpful in correcting a serious issue. All we got back from the company was denial that water was getting in the tubes. Three years later, they announced their new kayak line no longer had tubes filling with water.

The steps that BionX took in contacting us to take control of the quality of their products was a complete surprise and most refreshing approach. It showed us that they cared.

BionX System Pros

Warranty on all three parts is three years

No run around with claims; company stands behind their warranty

Extensive network of dealers worldwide

Rear hub gearless direct drive hub motors have few moving parts which makes them more reliable than mid-drive motors

Batteries can be charged on or off the bikes

Versatile drive system offers throttle mode, pedal assist or regen mode in addition to regenerative braking

Changing assist levels and modes is easy and instantly effective

Amazing power and hill climbing assistance with the D series, even with touring luggage

BionX system Cons

Trouble shooting problems necessitates dealer assistance because of complex computer technology at the heart of the system

Direct-Drive hub motors have drag when unpowered, making the bike feel sluggish to pedal

System adds 17 pounds of weight to your bike

Silent performance at lower assist levels but wheel "sings" at higher levels when pedaling hard

Final Thoughts on Touring with E-Bikes

Generally speaking, we were not interested in pedaling upwards of 50 miles a day.

We never had a problem recharging the batteries: in restaurants for lunch if needed, at campgrounds, even a couple of times in private homes.

Distances between interesting destinations were well within our desired distance of travel per day.

We still pedaled; we still very much enjoyed the feeling of bicycling and daily accomplishment.

We were able to cycle the mountain areas we loved; without the motor assistance, we would have given that up; perhaps even bicycling altogether.

My stressed breathing all but disappeared.

We had fun!

We cycled about 4000 kilometers in 6 different countries: Slovenia, Croatia, Austria, Germany, Czech Republic, and Italy. We found a lot of scenically rich, challenging, mountain routes that we could not have enjoyed without our BionX motorized systems. We are still cycling despite some health issues. We are having a blast!

Equipment Short List

Bicycles

Mike rides the Novara Safari touring bike built by REI. Novara Safari is a mountain bike/touring hybrid that can handle dirt roads and heavy loads.

Specifications:

- Shimano V – brakes; it is set up for the option to switch to disc. Mike upgraded to rear disc brakes
- Double butted Reynolds 520 steel frame and fork are built for solid handling under heavy loads
- Shimano 27 speed drive train is ideal for the loads and long distance touring
- The crank set is a Shimano FC – M521 – S, 48/36/26
- The rear cluster is Shimano HG 50: 11–32, 9 speed
- The front and rear derailleur are a Shimano Deore
- SRAM Attack twist shifters: Mustache handlebar supplies a wide range of hand positions.
- Weinmann rims and Continental Town Ride tires which Mike upgraded to Schwalbe Marathon Plus tires
- **Comes ready to travel with a sturdy aluminum rear rack that's been updated to better fit panniers and offers improved clearance** for disc brakes.
- The weight is 29.89 pounds

Anne rides an upgraded model of the folding trike called the e2. The original was designed by an Aussie who needed to transport his trike in his compact car. It folds, without taking anything apart, in 6 seconds into the smallest fold of any trike in the world. It is possible to transport three of them in the rear of an SUV. In its original box, it meets airline standards for regular luggage. It can also be made to fit into a regulation airline suitcase by taking off the wheels.

Components:

- Rear cassette: Shimano HG-70 Capreo, 9-26, 9 speed.
- Crank set: Shimano Tiagra 4603, 170 mm TPL 30/39/50T
- Rear derailleur: Shimano Tiagra 4601 GS mid cage

- Front derailleur: Shimano Sora FD – 3503
- Shifters: Shimano Dura Ace SL – BS 77, 9 speed bar end shifters
- Brakes: Sturmey Archer Drum
- Front hubs: Sturmey archer XF – D drum brakes: quick release rear hub: Capreo
- Wheels: 16 inch 349 mm 32 hole alloy double wall. We added dropouts to the rear fork to accommodate a rear 20" wheel because of adding BionX electric assist
- Tires: Schwalbe Marathon
- Weight: 39 pounds

Bicycle Equipment

- Panniers: Ortlieb waterproof front and rear panniers for Mike; Rear Ortlieb panniers for Anne
- Rear Rack Pac Medium by Ortlieb: one each
- Waterproof front handlebar bag for Mike
- Bell bike helmet
- Tire pump & patch kit
- Cable and lock
- Basic maintenance kit
- Clip less pedals
- Pearl Izumi bike shoes
- Keene Venice H2 Sandals as second pair of shoes

Camping Equipment

- Tent: REI half Dome 2+ tent
- Sleeping bags: Big Agnes Lulu
- Sleeping pads: Thermarest full length self inflating mattresses
- Camp chairs: REI FlexLite chair
- Camp stove: Primus backpacking stove used with gas canisters
- Stainless steel nesting pots
- Utensils: Snow Peak titanium spork

Electronic equipment

Nexus 5 Smart Phone. This is an unlocked phone. We use it for Internet access, and all the good things smart phones offer. This phone does not need to be associated with any single carrier. Especially useful for navigating. We liked the App Google Maps.

Samsung Galaxy 10.1 tablet. We wrote our daily travel logs on this.

SanDisk 128MB flash drive for backing up files. We also used free cloud storage such as Google Drive, Dropbox, and all the others that were free.

USB adapter for Samsung Galaxy so we could plug in the flash drive and the camera.

Garmin Touring Pro GPS. This particular GPS is designed for people who want information for touring as opposed to information for fitness and training. It gives us elevations, speed, distance, percent of ascent and descent, and mapping capabilities.

Canon SX170IS camera

Anker Astro E4 13,000 mAH dual USB portable charger backup external battery power bank for iPad, Mini, iPhone, Galaxy, Nexus, and most other smart phones and tablets. Micro USB cable included. Charges off your computer. We charge the battery pack every time we found a place with electricity. That way, if we could not find electricity, the battery pack could charge all our USB devices when we were off the grid. If you want to charge the battery pack from a wall outlet instead of through your computer, you need the Anker 18W charger listed below.

Anker 18W/3.6A Dual-Port USB wall charger. To use this charger in Europe, you also need an adapter plug for Europe, just the adapter...not a converter...since the wall charger will handle 110 to 220 volts.

Heavy Duty grounded USA to European German Schuko Outlet Plug adapter-6pack.

Adapter for using campsite electricity. Purchased in Ljubljana.

All of these electronics fit into Mike's front handlebar bag which is waterproof. We could detach the bag from the bike at any time and carry it on our shoulder with the attached strap, or take it into the tent.

Ljubljana, Slovenia-A Capital City for Bicycles

We landed in Ljubljana. The airport is small, and friendly; not like one would think a capital city airport would be .

Our BionX dealer, Gregor Pecnik, arranged for a friend to pick us up, bicycles and all the bulky equipment we brought with us, and delivered us to Gregor's shop. After dropping off the bikes, he then took us to our pre-arranged lodging. Slovenian hospitality stayed at that high level our entire trip around the country.

Our lodging, Ljubljana Resort Hotel and Camp Ground, was about 6 miles out from the city center. It turned out to be a great place to meet other cyclists and prepare for our journey.

Accessible right from the campground was a 6 kilometer bicycle path along the lovely Sava River. Since our bikes were with Gregor, getting fitted with BionX equipment, we rented bikes right from the hotel and used the bike path to unwind from the long flight. It was then we discovered the immense network of bicycle paths permeating the entire city. In our years of bicycle travels, we have always done our best to avoid all cities. But Ljubljana was a pleasure to explore on bicycles because of these safe paths.

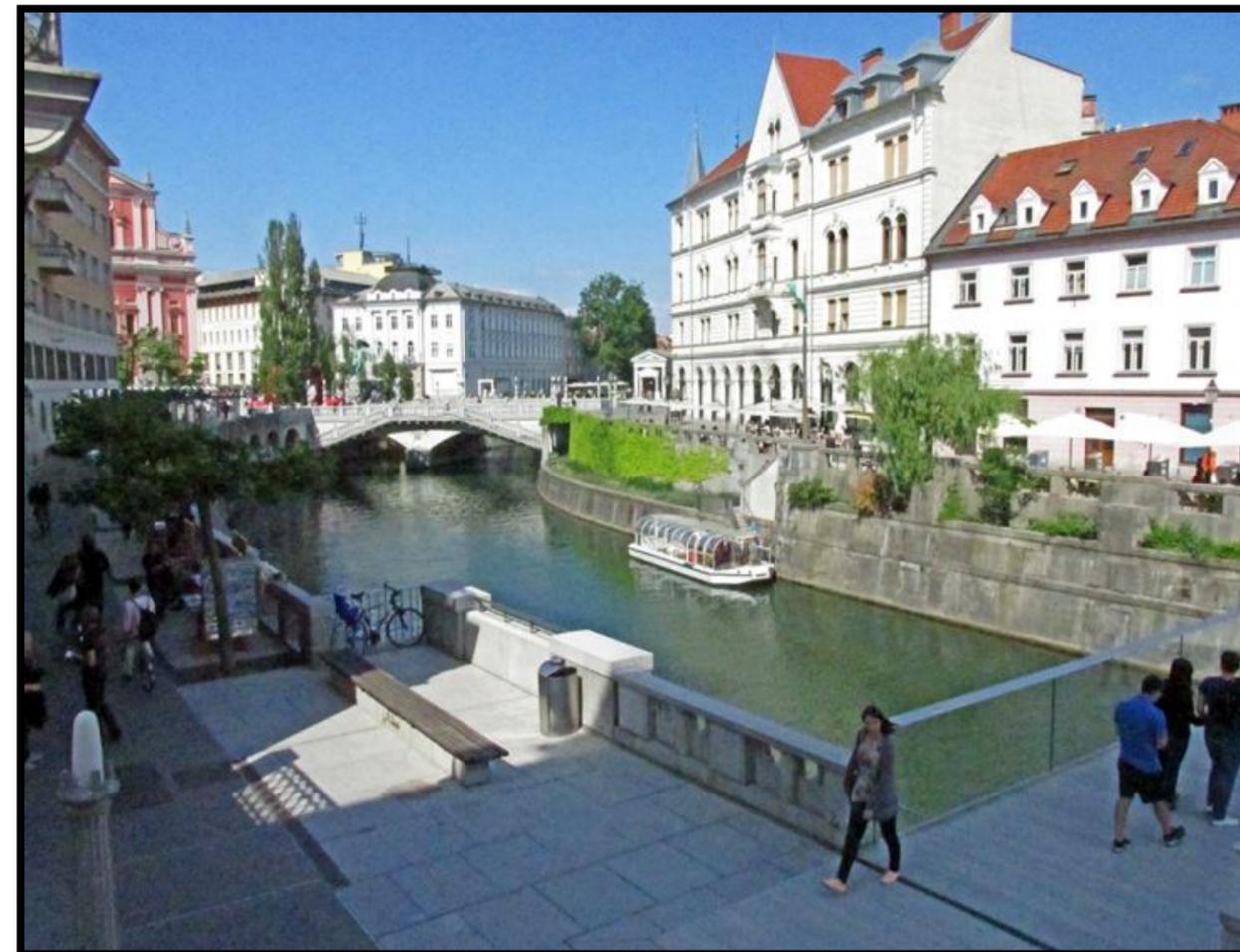
Because of the ease of bicycling into and out of Ljubljana, we found ourselves using the city as a hub for various routes around Slovenia.

Our explorations took us first to the city center, a lovely historic center on the banks of the Ljubljanica River. Aside from all the wondrous tourist sites, two places of interest kept us coming back: the Ljubljana Visitors Bureau, and the Slovenian Visitors Bureau. Between these two places, we picked up many free maps; just

what we needed to plan some routes.

Another location we cycled to several time was the BTC shopping center. There we found an excellent bicycle store, a Garmin store where we purchased the Adria Topo Pro Garmin maps that covered Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia and Albania. **Outdoor equipment stores, electronic stores...just about everything one could think of...all in one location!**

Another important visit was to Telekom Slovenija and Simobil.si to compare internet plans. We carried our Nexus 5 unlocked smart phone with plans to purchase internet Sim cards as we traveled within each country. All the countries we traveled in offered a monthly internet service plan with 1 or 2 GB data usage options. We found 1 GB to be quite ample for our needs. The plans cost about \$35 a month. Sometimes one would offer special one or two week internet packages as well. (Last summer, on our travels around Europe, we tried using campground internet and found the signal so weak as to be useless.)



Route A

Ljubljana-Kolpa River Loop Complete

Total Distance: 338 km (210 mi)

Gain=6027 m (19774 ft)

Loss=6027 m (19774 ft)

Max=900 m (2953 ft)

Our bikes ready, shopping completed, our bags packed, it was time to ride. Gregor and Bojan had helped us pour over maps and select a route for starters: following the Kolpa River that creates the border between Slovenia and Croatia. We created a loop out of the route, ending up back in Ljubljana before heading into the Alps to the north.



A multi day mountainous ride on mostly low traffic roads starting and ending in Ljubljana. Very Scenic and highlights unique areas of Slovenia's Southeast region with Novo Mesto at the center.

For 113 kilometers, the Kolpa River delineates the southern border of Slovenia where it meets Croatia. It flows a total of 292 kilometers from its source in northern Croatia to the town of Sisak where it flows into the Sava River.

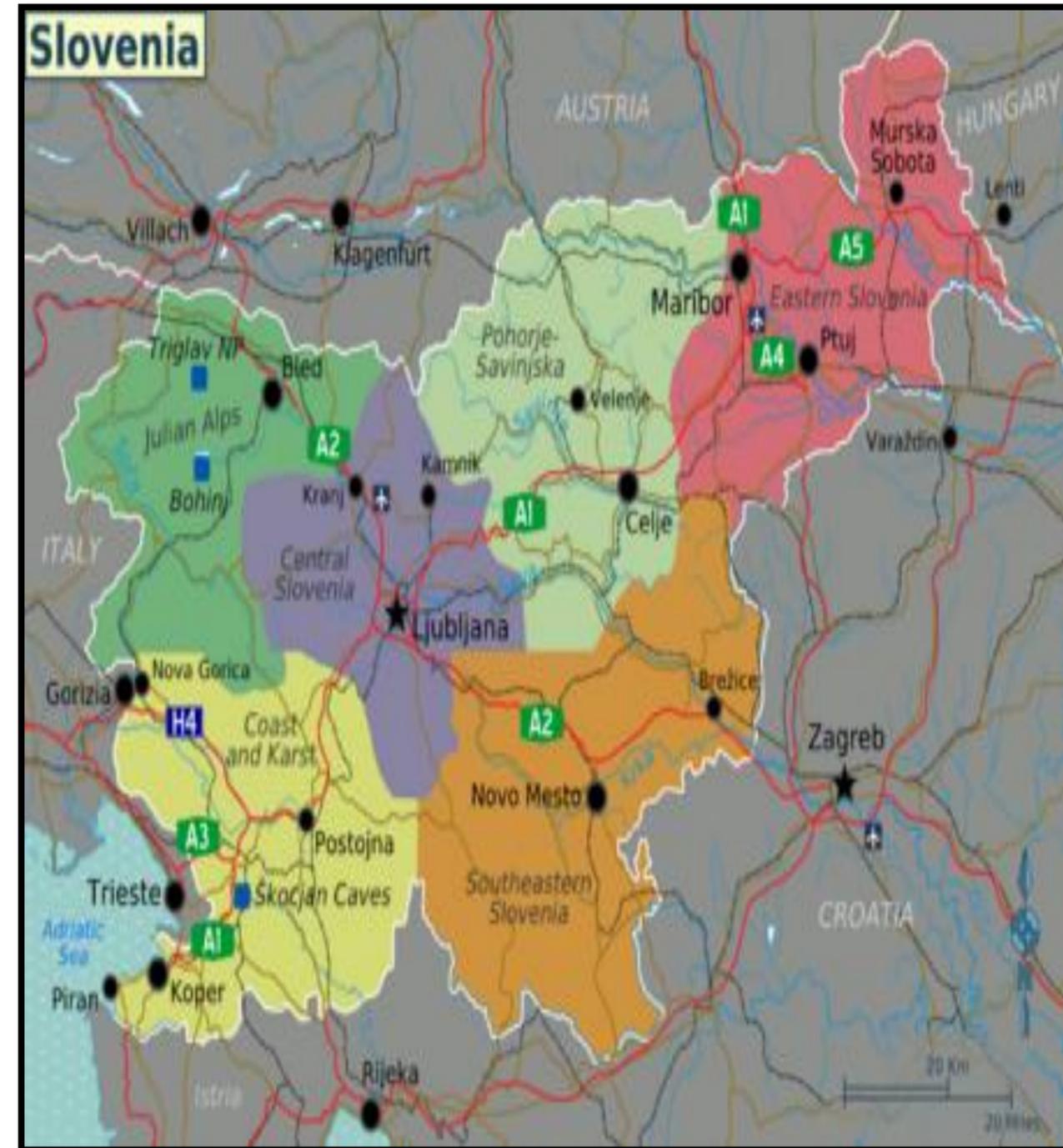
The water of the Kolpa River is especially clear and free of pollution. It has become a favorite swimming river for Slovenians and Croatians with its ambient temperature. Canoe and kayak

trips down the river are also very popular. There are several outfitters along the banks.

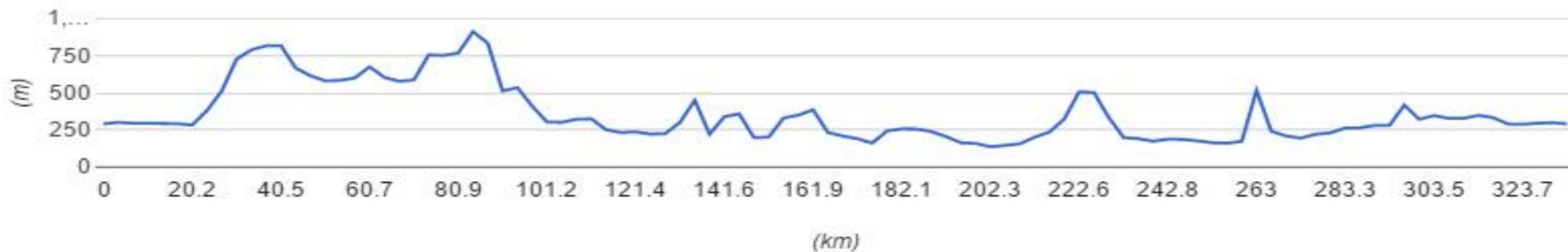
Most importantly for cyclists, the paved roads that follow the Kolpa River wind through absolutely lovely, hilly countryside studded with charming small villages. There are plentiful campsites scattered at just the right cycling distances. Markets, restaurants and other store amenities are also close, yet the route feels very remote.

Getting from Ljubljana to the Kolpa River is just as interesting. South from Ljubljana, forested mountains separate the river from the city and offer a challenging, yet scenic ride on delicious pavement with a sprinkling of traffic.

After leaving the Kolpa River drainage, the route turns back towards Ljubljana passing through numerous splendid highlights in the area.



Route A-Ljubljana-Kolpa River Loop-Complete



Route A-Stage 1

Ljubljana-Rakitna

Distance: 32 km (20 mi)

Gain=767 m (2516 ft)

Loss=261 m (856 ft)

Max=812 m (2664 ft)

Bicycle paths all the way from Ljubljana Resort Hotel to turnoff to Podpec.

From the turnoff to Podpec, the road is 2 lane and has moderate to heavy traffic. No bike path; no shoulder. But it is a relatively short section.

Podpec has market but no hotels or camping.

After Podpec, we rode on quiet secondary road to Rakitna. Steep climbing begins after Podpec. Ten kilometer climb from Podpec to Rakitna with some 10% grades,

Rakitna is at 800 meters. Small market (Mercator), lovely mountain town with minimal amenities.

The Rakitna Hotel is the only lodging in the area. There is no camping. The hotel is about 2 kilometers further south from the market.

Rakitna Hotel= 120E for double included breakfast. Full restaurant serving delicious homemade bread, strudel, pizza all excellent. No place to use your own cooking equipment.

Hosts cheerful and very helpful. No issues taking the bikes inside the lobby.

Both batteries drained by the time we reached the hotel. We both used level 4 to climb the hill as we were not yet in good condition.

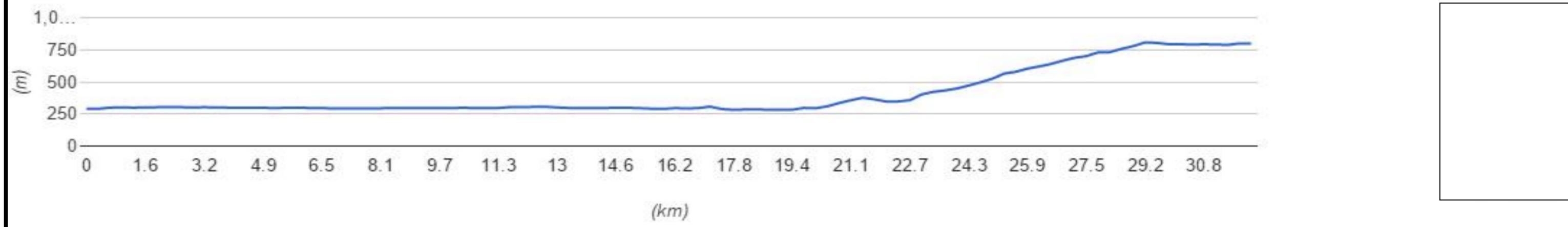


1-Rakitna Hotel



Route A-Stage 1

Ljubljana to Rakitna

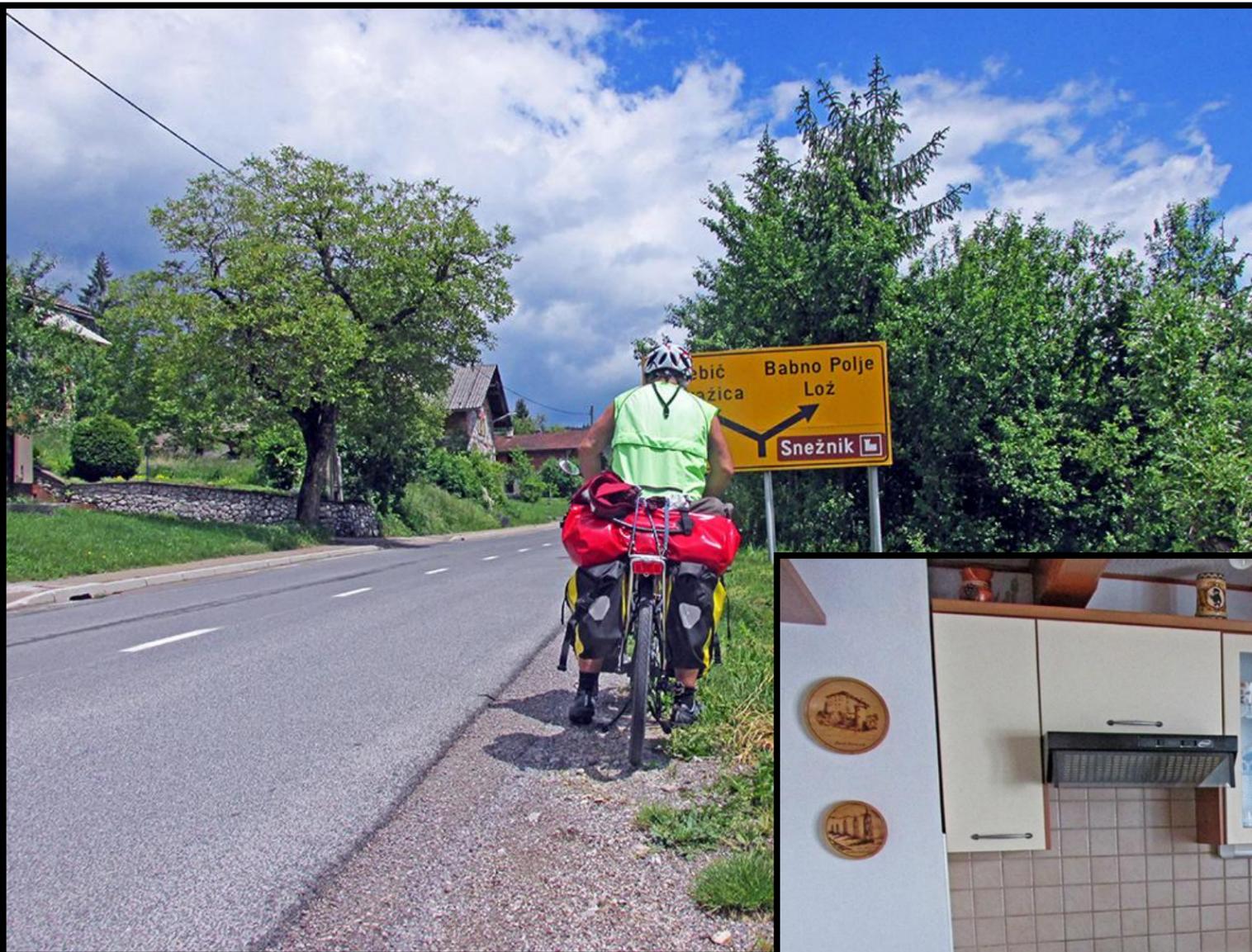


Route A-Stage 2

Rakitna to Prezid Croatia

Distance: 47 km (29 mi)
Gain=995 m (3264 ft)
Loss=1024 m (3359 ft)
Max=900 m (2952 ft)

Lovely scenery through hilly farm country. Narrow road in reasonably good condition. No shoulder. Some truck and car traffic but very patient and courteous to bicycles. Long pleasant downhill all the way to Cerknica.



Cerknica is a moderate size town with all amenities. Numerous lodging possibilities-market.

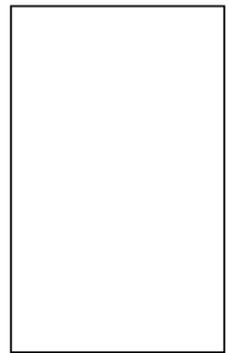
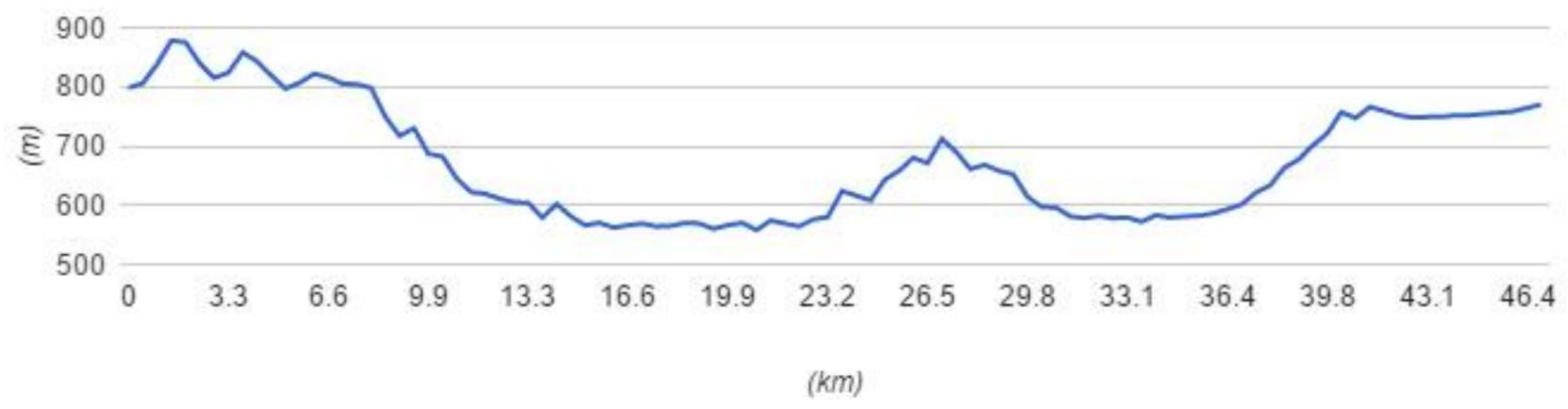
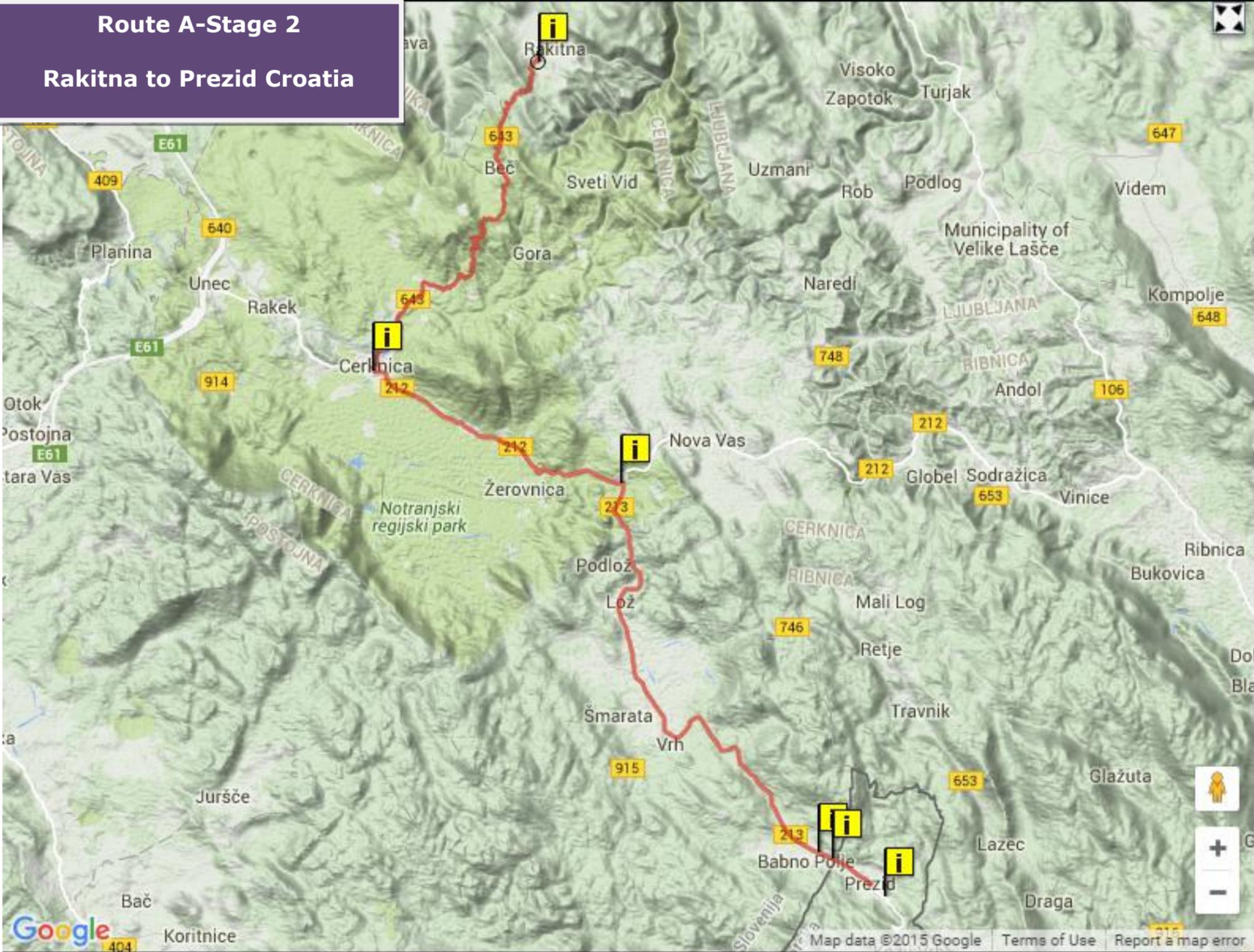
Martinjak, Grahovo, Blocice, Bloska Polica (limestone caves) Lož, Stari Trg, Pudob, Podgora Babno Polje...no lodging, no rooms or apartments; market in Babno Polje.

Babno Polje: Border passport checkpoint-Cross into Croatia a non-Schengen country.

Prezid, Croatia-Small village with market but no restaurants. Wonderful Apartment at south end of town called Apartmaji Turk. Olga, hostess of the Apartment will cook supper for you. Extreme hospitality! Does not speak English or any other language, but her daughter speaks excellent English. No camping in the area.



Route A-Stage 2
Rakitna to Prezid Croatia



Route A-Stage 3

Prezid to Brod Na Kupa Croatia

Distance: 43 km (27 mi)
Gain=1118 m (3667 ft)
Loss=1661 m (5449 ft)
Max=921 m (3022 ft)

We leave the principle highway 32 and take the turn off to Cabar on 305. This is an awesome day of riding. Climb a short bit and then it is downhill most of the way to the Kolpe River. Good quality road, minimal traffic, lots of charming small villages rimmed by high mountains.

Cabar: lovely village with unique church in the center. No lodging or market.

Plesce: Another tiny village with lovely church. Restaurant and rooms to rent; also **Apartment**.

Osilnica: expensive tourist hotel with every amenity: rafting the river, tennis, and a hundred other activities. 50 Euro for a plain hotel room. Never did find any of the advertized **Apartment**s.

Crossed into Slovenia at Osilnica.

Interesting border. Had to buy permission **to cross on "local road"**. **Three** Kuna per person; could not pay in Euro. Only non-EU residents paid. Had to ride back to Plesce to exchange to Kuna. Lady police officer was full of power needs. **When we got to border at Brod Na Kupa, the police didn't care about the permission paper the lady gave us!**

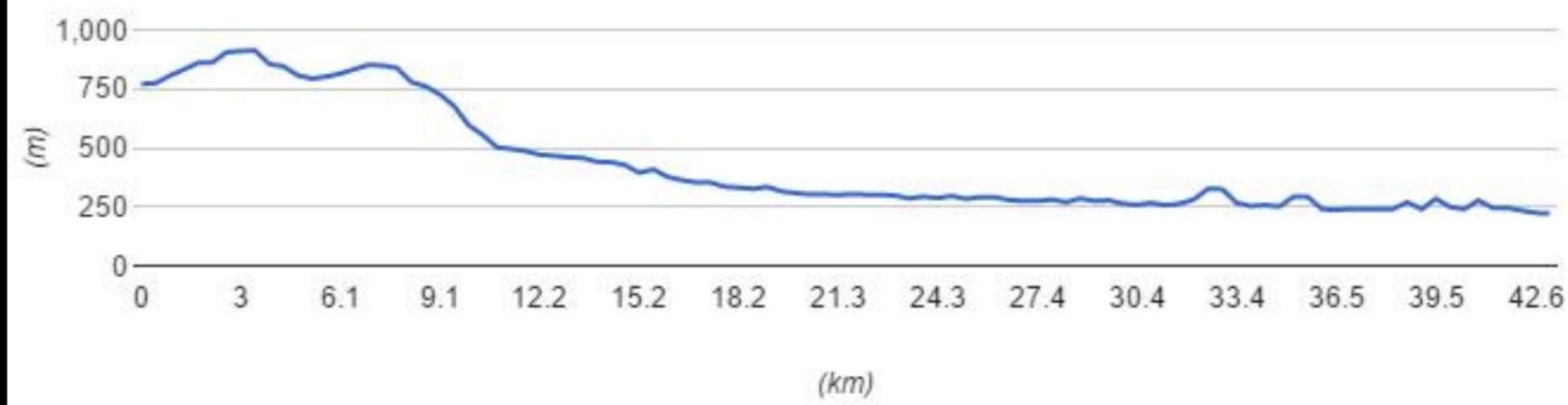
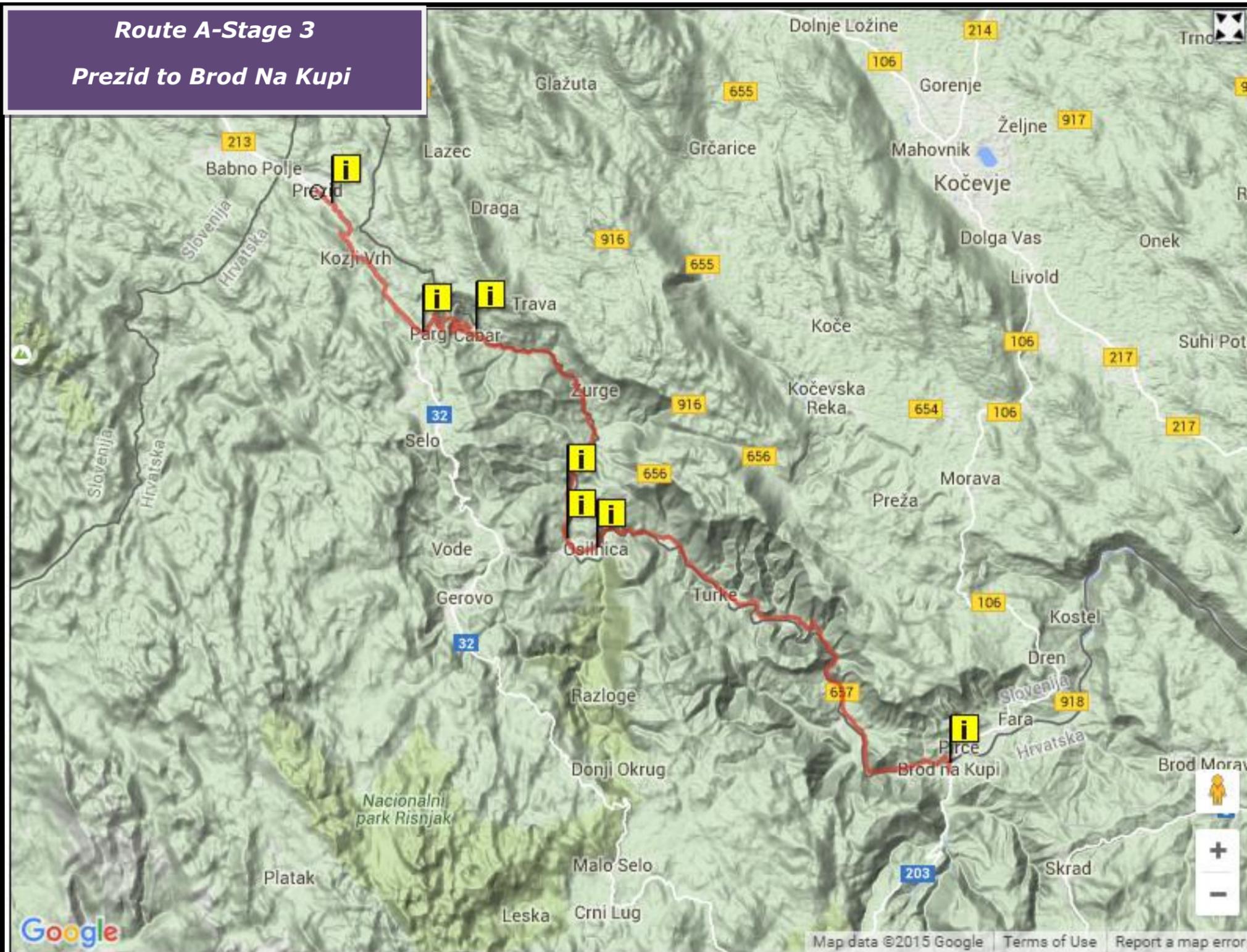
Petrina: border crossing to Brod Na Kupa, Croatia.

Brod Na Kupa: Hotel with restaurant for 49 Euro on the main street but they would not let us look at a room. Just 50 meters down the street we found an **Apartment** for 42 Euro. Living room, **kitchen, two bedrooms...very friendly.** Small market nearby.



Route A-Stage 3

Prezid to Brod Na Kupi



Osilnica (Sela)
gostilna Kovač
apartmaji Janeš
apartmaji Žagar
apartma Osvald

Grintovec pri Osilnici
okrepčevalnica Štimec

Bosljiva Loka
apartmaji Krempa



Križmanj

Route A-Stage 4

Brod Na Kupi to Srednji Radenci

Distance: 31 Km (19 mi)
Gain=745 m (2444 ft)
Loss=779 m (2555 ft)
Max=244 m (800 ft)

Leave Brod Na Kupi and cross the border back into Slovenia. The road now follows the river quite closely. No groceries on entire route. Buy in Brod Na Kupi.

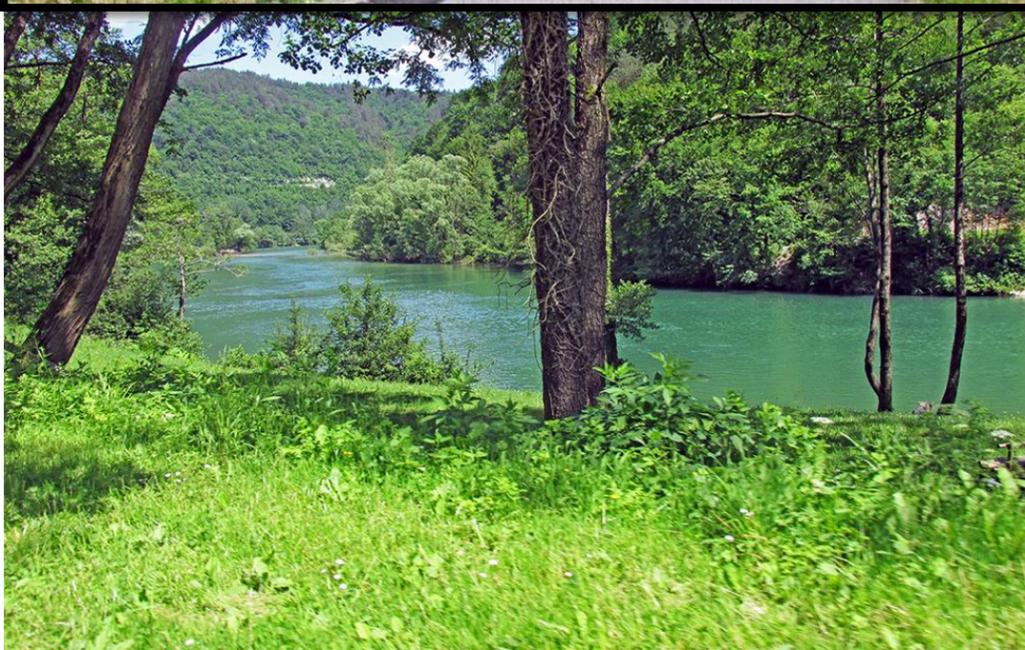
Caution: Be careful not to turn towards Briga. A barely visible small road continues straight ahead and closer to the river. That is the road you want to take.

Stunning riding on mostly good road, minimal traffic, with some good views of the Kolpa River. Lovely Slovenian valley with steep mountains on both sides. Small villages.

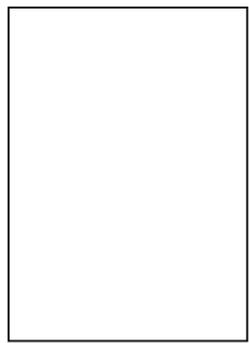
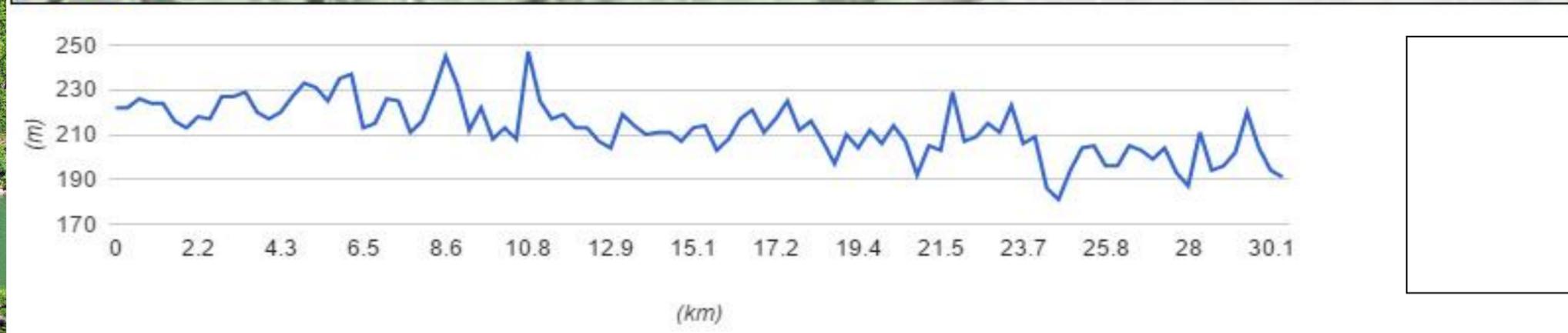
Bilpa: Apartment; no groceries.

Camped at Srednji Radenci. Absolutely lovely cabins and camping on the river. No groceries or food available other than beer, coke, ice cream. Picnic tables cooking shelter, fire pit. Owners gave us potatoes to cook as we had no food with us. They do river trips: info@kolpa-adventures.com, <http://www.kolpa-adventures.com/>





Route A-Stage 4
Brod Na Kupa-Srednji Radenci



Route A-Stage 5

Srednji Radenci to Vinica

Distance: 21 km (13 mi)

Gain=565 m (1854 ft)

Loss=572 m (1876 ft)

Max=439 m (1440 ft)

Two steep climbs right from our camping spot. The map showed a bicycle route along the river, but talking to the locals, it was more suitable for mountain bikes as it turned to rough dirt. So we took the hilly inland road. Beautiful route through lovely hill towns.

We climbed 837 ft in 3.45 miles. One section was steep gravel for about a mile. Then down very steep and back up again for 506 ft in 1.54 miles. Pretty steep grades.

Our batteries drained three bars out of nine. Always wanting to recharge, we descended slowly using the motor. Mike got one bar back.

Bionx says best practice is to keep up high revolutions to use less power climbing and therein lies the dilemma. With so much luggage, it is hard to keep up 70 to 80 revolutions

on long hills. Furthermore, Anne's lungs cannot maintain more than sixty revolutions as even without working, high revolutions rob her of adequate oxygen. The bottom line however is that we never could have cycled this route with luggage without the motor. We simply would have stalled out on the steep grades.

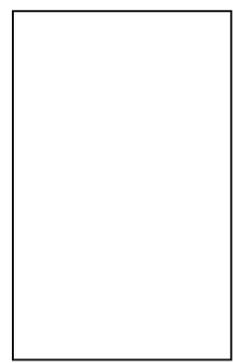
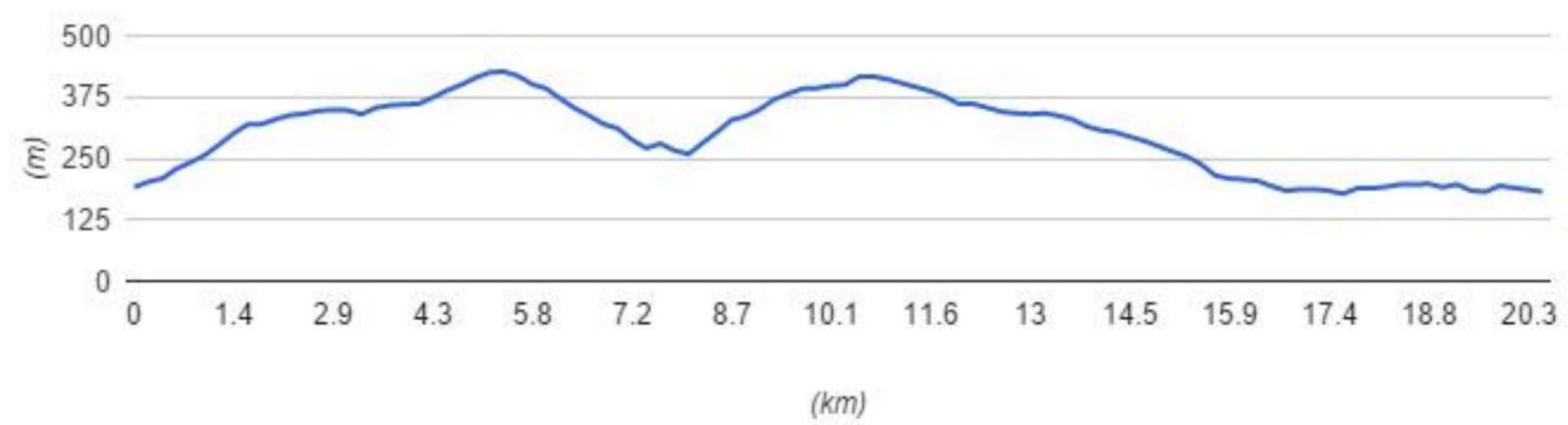
Vinica is another tiny town, but there is a market on the road leading towards Novo Mesto about a kilometer above town. There is also a restaurant that rents rooms and **Apartments**.

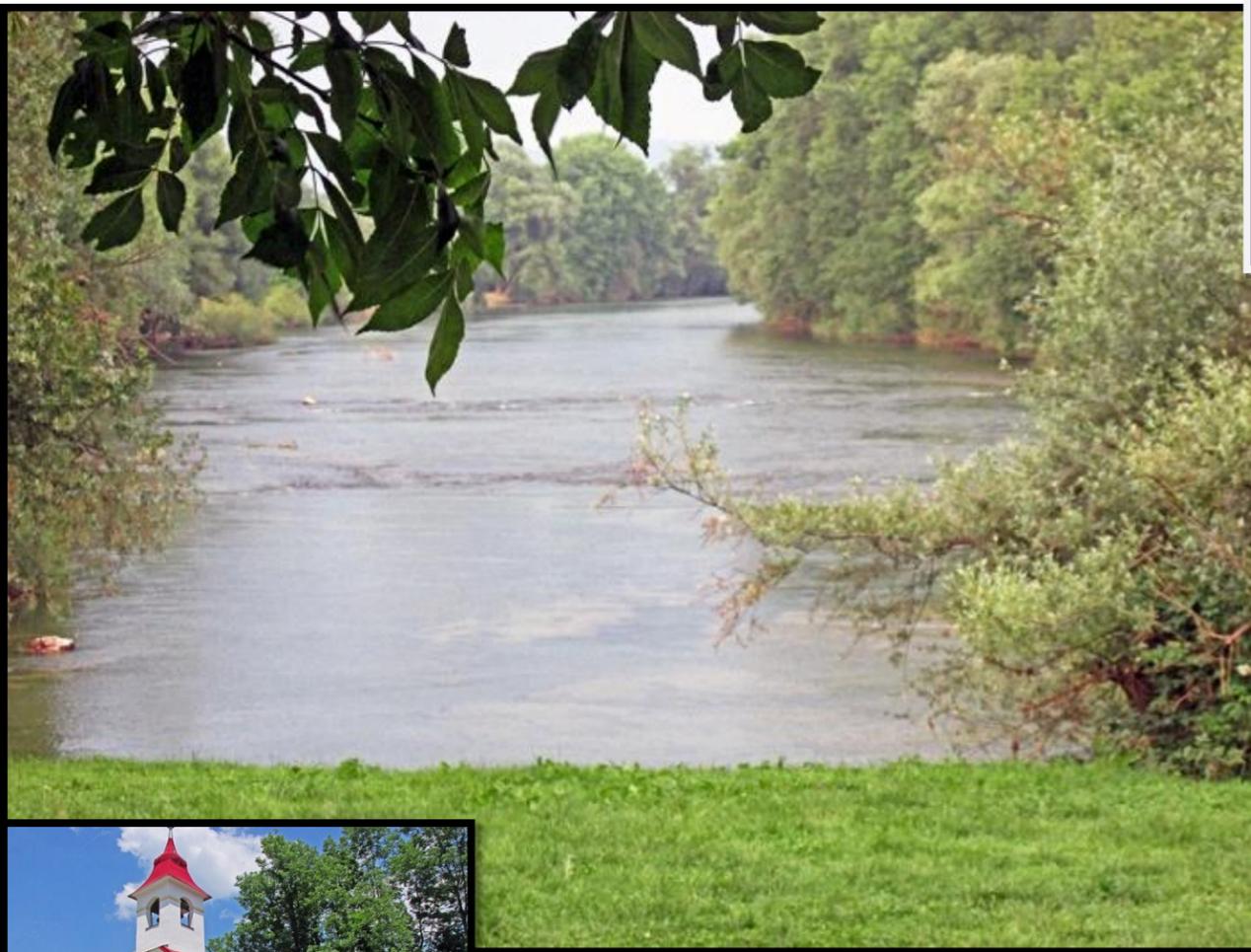
There are two camping caravan parks on the river below Vinica. Take the road to the Croatian border. Right at the border station is a small road to the left going down stream. The two camping places are within a kilometer. The first was more for full time caravans. We stayed at the second one, Kamp Kolpa. The caravan park was stuffed, but they had nice camping spots with picnic tables right on the river. Power available; no food at the restaurant but maybe that was because we were too early in the season.





Route A-Stage 5
Srednji Radenci to Vinica





Route A-Stage 6

Vinica to Podzemelj

Distance: 28 km (17 mi)
Gain=433 m (1420 ft)
Loss=463 m (1519 ft)
Max=300 m (984 ft)

You may hear about a route that follows the river instead of heading inland. After much research, we discover the route is a lot of single track on steep gravel designed for mountain bikes. Obviously, we stayed on the roads!

This is a hilly day with the longest climb about 2.5 miles with some 10% sections. It passes through a combination of lovely forest and small villages. It leaves the Kolpa River as soon as it climbs out of Vinica. There are no views of the river until the campground at Podzemelj.

Two-lane good paving; no shoulder; minimal traffic; no amenities along the route.

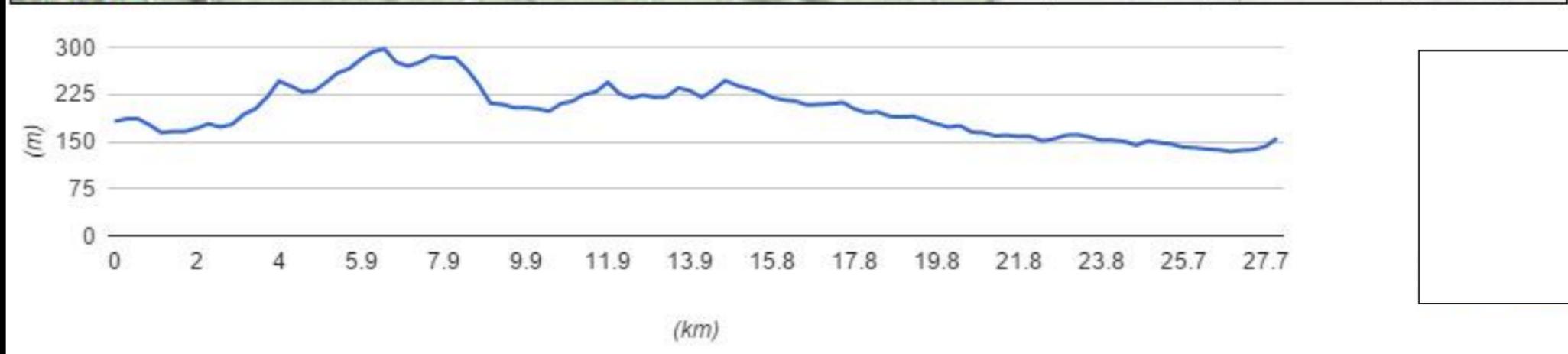
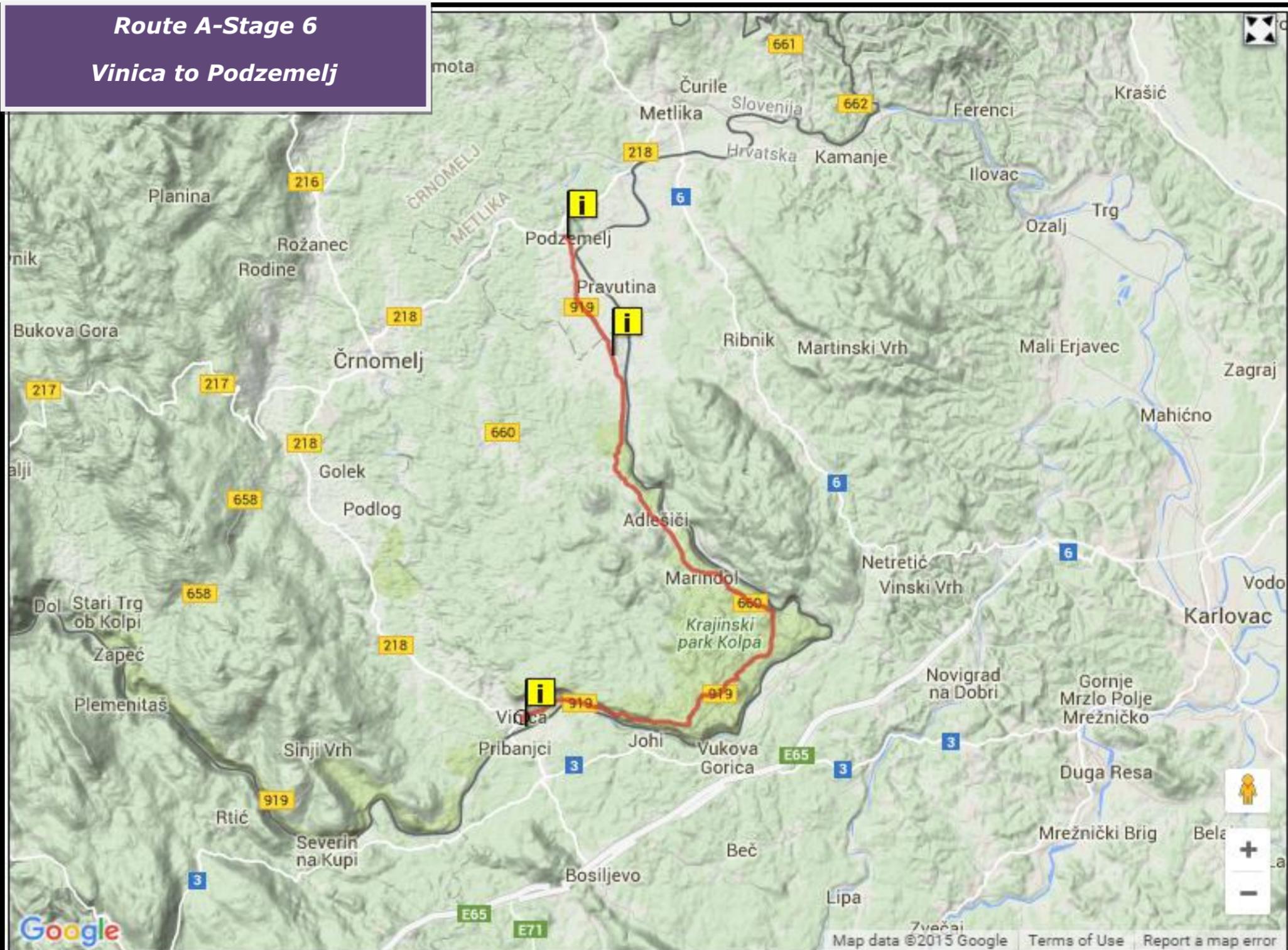


Podzemelj campground is a lovely spot on the river with camping sites. No tables. Great new bathroom facility. Very nice and reasonably priced restaurant overlooking the river.

Metlika is 4 miles further on a more busy road. Market and all amenities. Also a bicycling hotel.

Campground and hotel affiliated. Have excellent bicycling maps for this area with descriptions and elevations. We discovered most of the routes would be very difficult with a loaded touring bike. Steep hills on gravel roads.

Route A-Stage 6
Vinica to Podzemelj



Route A-Stage 7

Podzernelj to Otocec Castle

Distance: 43 Km (27 mi)
Gain=897 m (2942 ft)
Loss=896 m (2939 ft)
Max=633 m (2076 ft)

It's an easy ride from our campground at Podzernelj to Semic via Gradec. We avoided the main road by taking two smaller country roads from camp to Gradec. At Gradec, we picked up a leisurely yellow road (two lane with no shoulder) all the way to Semic. This is very pretty countryside to ride. The road was good surface and with minimal traffic.

Semic is incredibly interesting as it leans against the side of a vast range of mountains. One could ride through the flatter valley to Crnomelj, but that was not our intention.

Instead, we carved our way up a strong hill on a very narrow road, following signs to Crmosnjice. Incredible views of the delicious valley below. The big hill was almost 5 miles long with some short, very steep sections up to 15% grade. Then, it was a 7 mile descent.

Turn off at Podturn for the only campground at Dolenjske Toplice which also has many hotels because of thermal spas in the area. The campground is adjacent to one of these hotel/pools.

We continued on to Novo Mesto and Otocec Castle where there is another very small and pleasant campground on the Krka River.

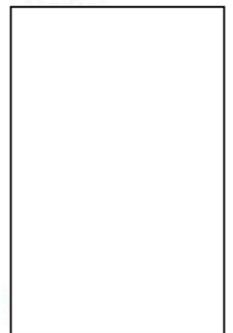
Be careful choosing your route to Novo Mesto. Go through Dolenjske Toplice/ Dobindol/Ursna Sela/Bircna Vas for the quieter route than the one on each side of the Krka River which is busier with traffic.

Otocec is about 12 miles from Dolenjske Toplice, on the other side of Novo Mesto, but it is not strenuous cycling. Follow signs to the castle to find the campground. There is no restaurant or food at Otocec or the campground.





Route A-Stage 7
Podzemelj to Otocec Castle



Route A-Stage 8

Otocec to Ljubljana

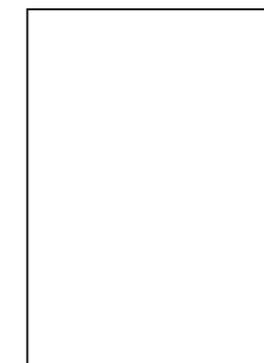
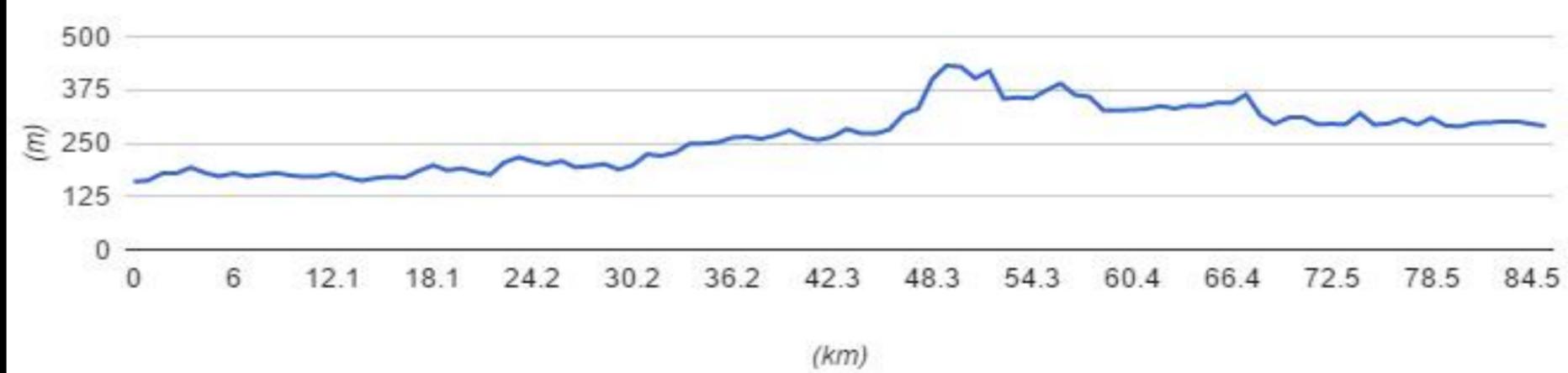
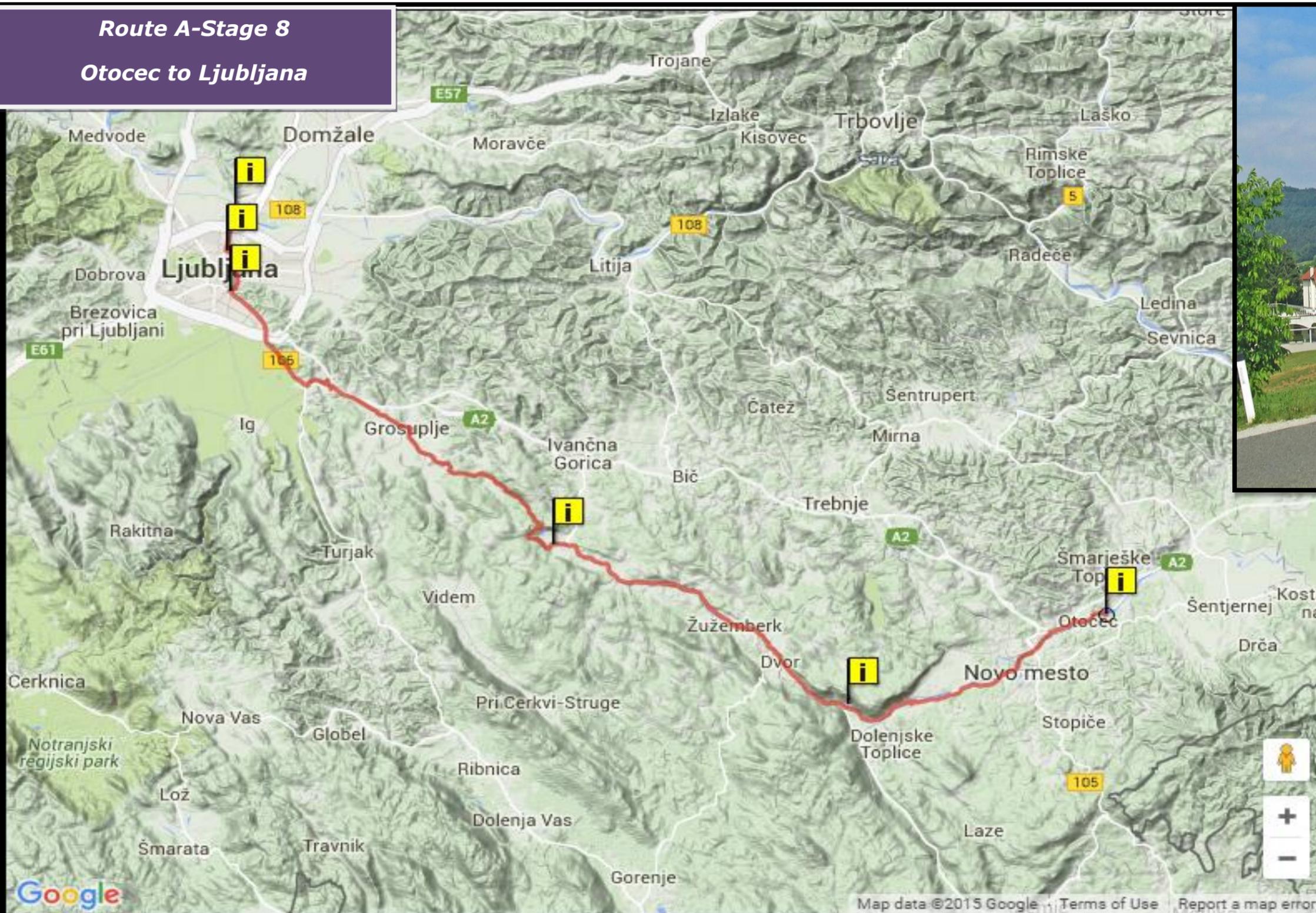
Distance: 86 km (53 mi)
Gain=1472 m (4829 ft)
Loss=1351 m (4432 ft)
Max=448 m (1470 ft)

Following the Krka River valley with occasional views of the river, this route climbs fairly easily all the way to Ljubljana. It is a 2 lane paved road with no shoulder, but the traffic is not heavy and the scenery was beautiful small towns and wide scenic valleys.

Turn off at Krka and follow a more remote route with hardly any traffic through forest and towns. This route starts out as packed gravel for about 2 miles and then changes back to paving. Very quiet way to approach Ljubljana.



Route A-Stage 8
Otocec to Ljubljana



Route B-Complete

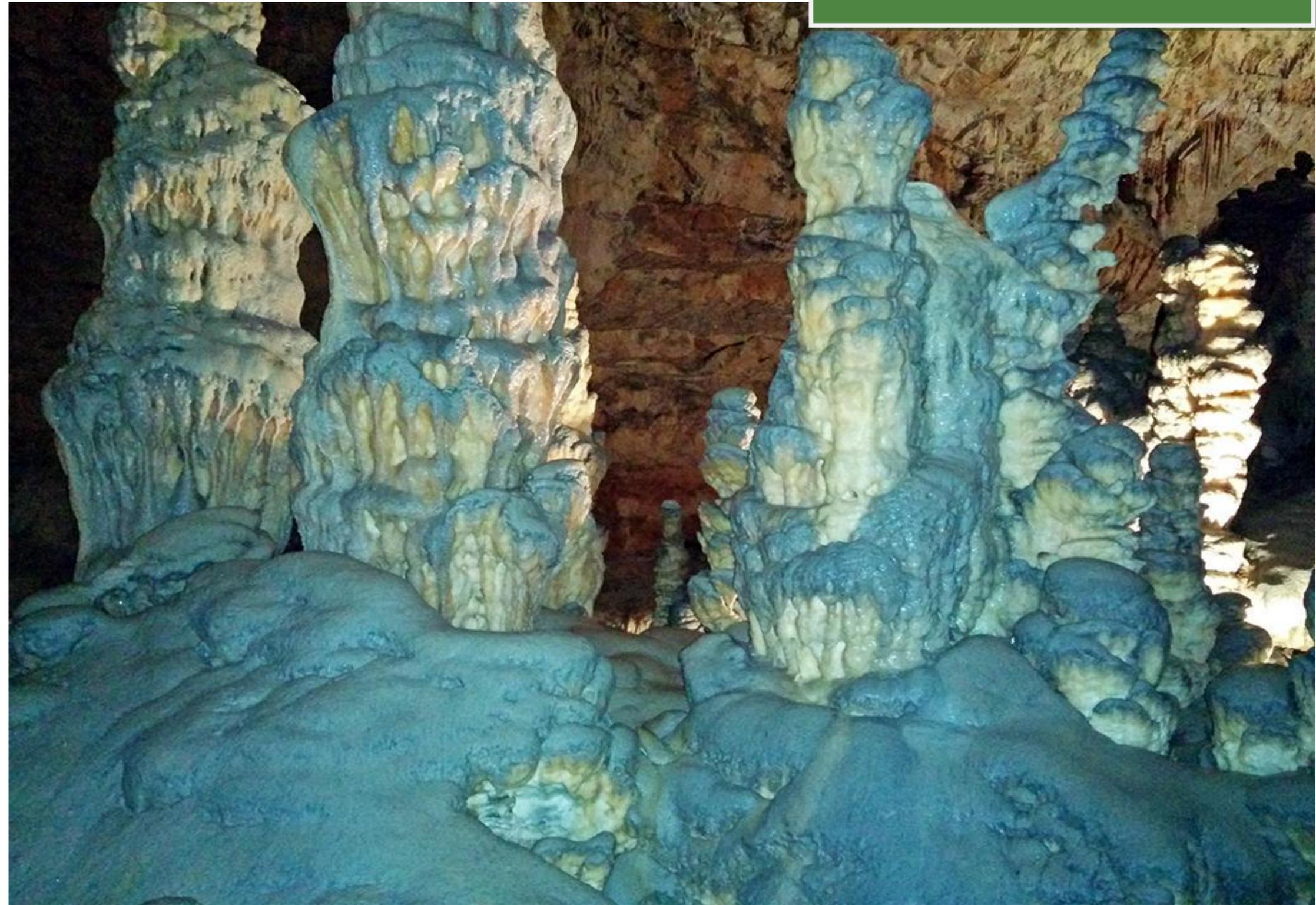
Ljubljana to Koper

Distance: 121 km (75 mi)
Gain=1808 m (5931 ft)
Loss=2098 m (6883 ft)
Max=669 m (2195 ft)

We did not cycle this route; we drove it. We decided to include route information and GPS tracks anyway. It is a popular route that many cyclists choose to cross through Slovenia on their way to other countries.

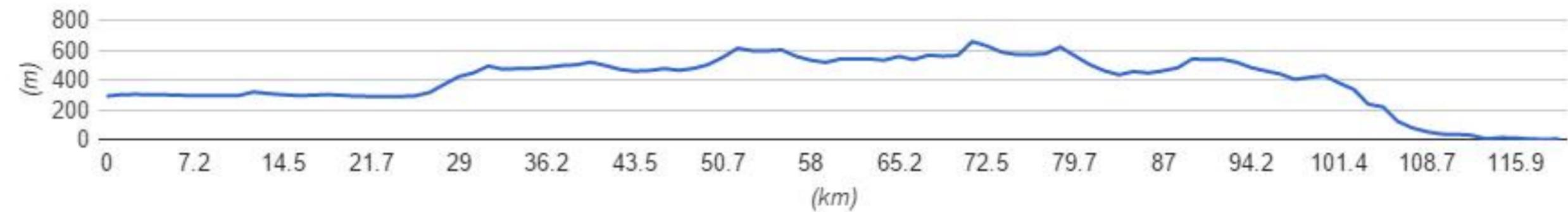
The route is pretty scenic wise, but not spectacular. It is the easiest route between the coast and Ljubljana. It follows the same valley as the main freeway E61, but stays on a secondary road: hwy 409. It passes right through Postojna.

The limestone caves in Postojna are well worth a visit. They are the most famous caves in Slovenia.



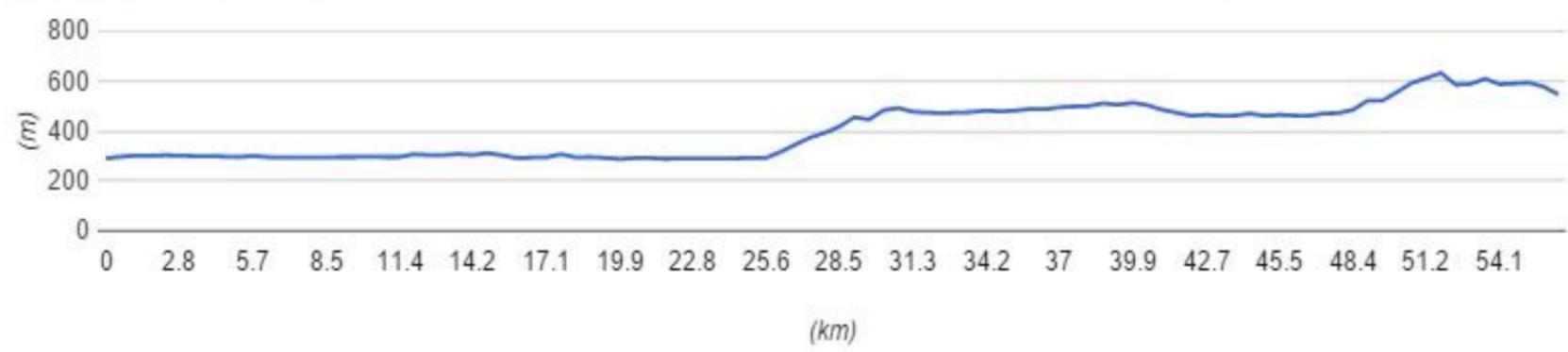
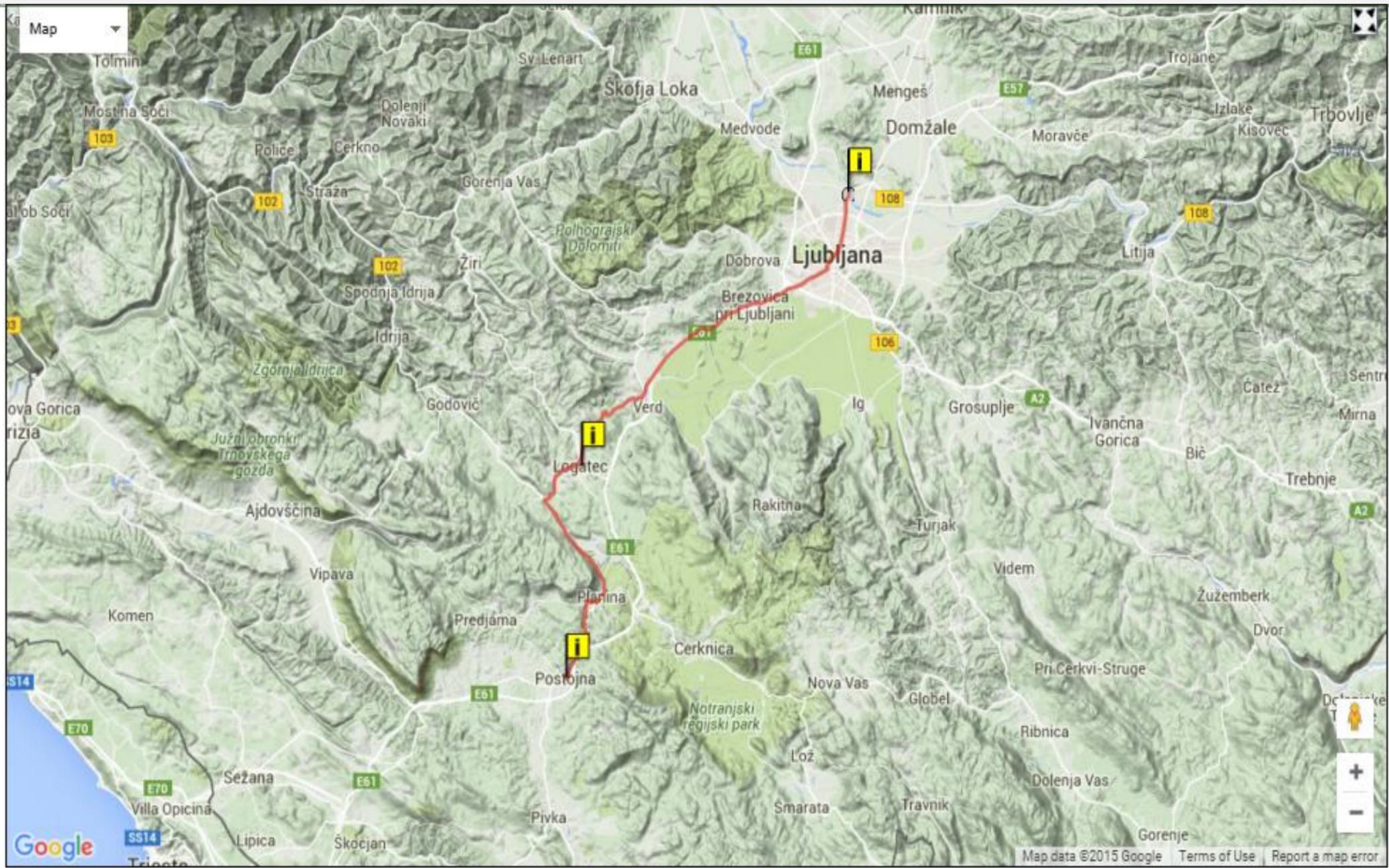
Route B-Complete

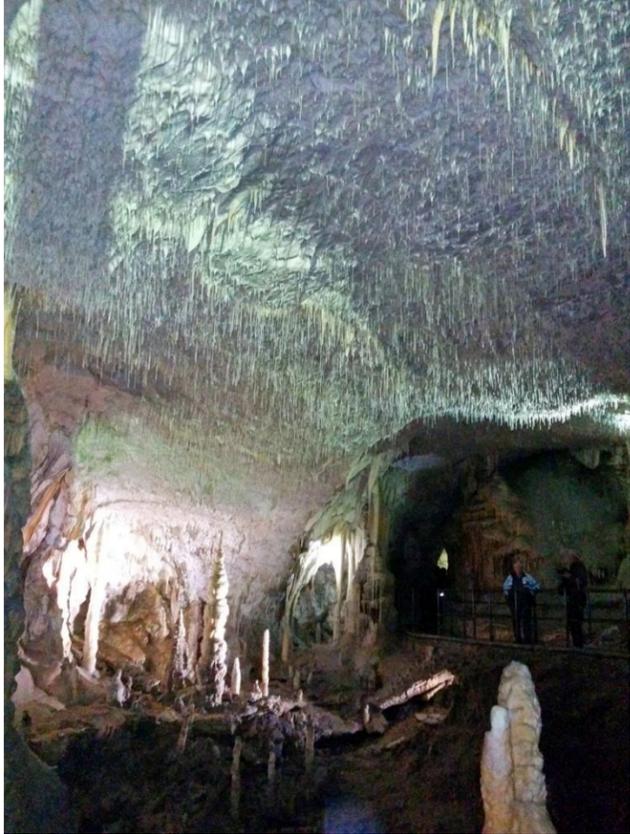
Ljubljana to Koper



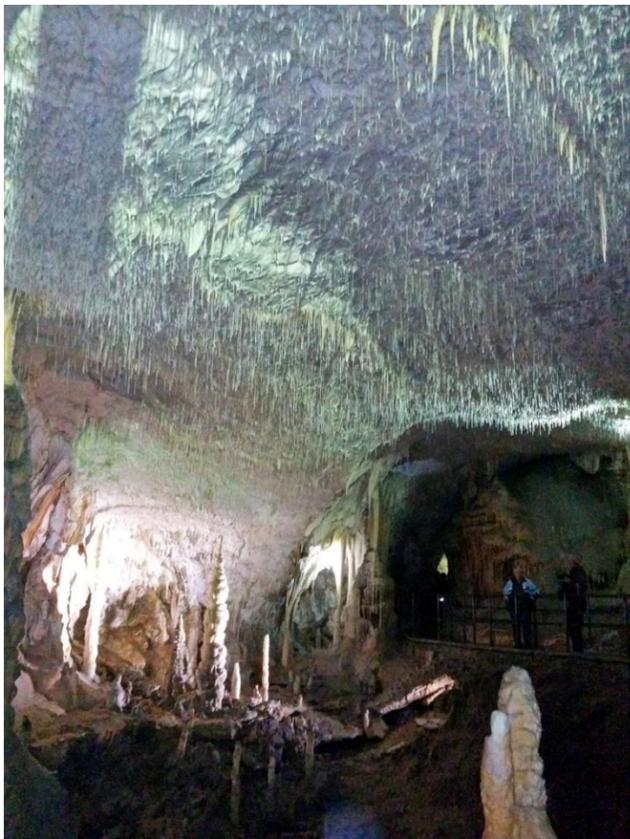
Route B-Stage 1
Ljubljana to Postojna

Distance: 57 km (35 mi); Loss= 707 m (2319 ft)
Gain= 964 m (3162 ft); Max= 629m (2064 ft)



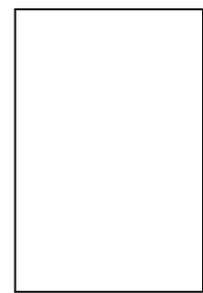


Postojna Cave



Route B-Stage 2
Postojna to Koper

Distance: 64 km (40mi); Loss= 1391 m (4564 ft)
Gain= 844 m (2769 ft); Max= 669 m (2293 ft)



Route C-Complete

Koper to Kranska Gora

Distance=238 km (146 mi)
Gain=3795 m (12,370 ft)
Loss=3132 m (10,225 ft)
Max=1611 m (5285 ft)

This is an exceptionally scenic route that leads from the Slovenian coast to the Alps and the highest Pass in Slovenia (Vrsic Pass at 1611 m or 5285 ft-<http://www.dangerousroads.org/eastern-europe/slovenia/619-vri-pass-slovenia.html>). It traverses the famous Karst Region with limestone caves, and crosses the spine of the Julian Alps. Much of the route follows the beautiful Soca River. There are plentiful opportunities for camping on this route. Although some sections have more traffic (especially on weekends), drivers are kind to cyclists.

Some of the special scenic attractions include Skocjan Caves, which we enjoyed even more than Postojna, Lipica, where the famous Lipizzaner horses are bred, the Soca River, and wonderful small villages and towns such as Tolmin, Kobarid, and Bovec. Spend a rest day hiking some of many scenic trails, or take a day ride to some of the mountain villages. This route has it all; it highlights all the reasons we loved cycling in Slovenia.



Route C-Complete

Koper to Kranska Gora



Route C-Stage 1

Koper to Kozina

Koper is Slovenia's busy port city. The old city center is home to 15th-century Praetorian Palace which is now Koper's tourist office. There are many historic buildings in the old town worth visiting. Street cafes and restaurants were always busy. The historic part of the city actually sat on an island that has been connected to the mainland by fill. The adjacent photo taken from the air is courtesy of <http://www.tourist-destinations.com/>.

The site has many excellent images of Koper from the air which allows the cyclist to see the surrounding countryside.

We discovered numerous touring cyclists began their journey through Slovenia from Koper.

There are dedicated bicycle paths getting out of Koper. EuroVelo 8 passes this way and shows on Open Street Maps. Be aware that although there are designated routes, signage is lacking at many intersections and following the route can be confusing as it meanders around the busy highways.

Once out of Koper, about 8 kilometers (5 miles) the route begins climbing and continues in that mode most of the way to Kozina.

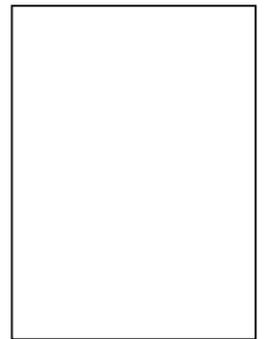
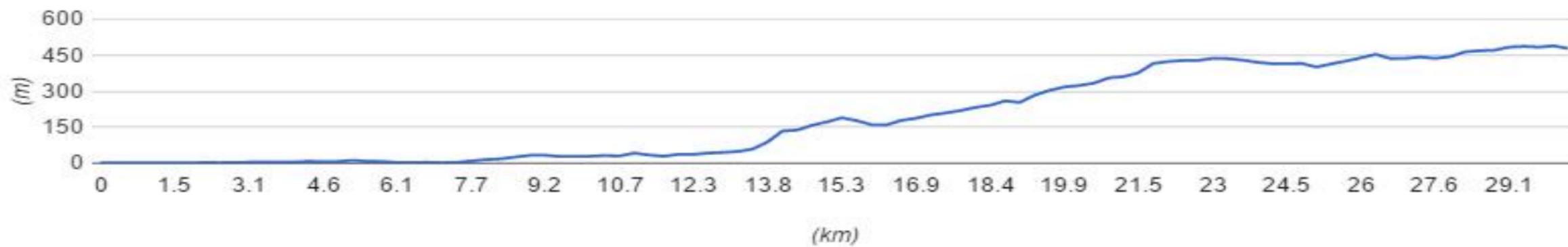
There is no camping in Kozina; Although our research indicated there was a campground, locals informed us it was closed. There are a lot of lodging choices in Kozina but they are scattered about and difficult to find. There is camping in Osp (<http://www.kmetija-vovk-osp.si/en/>) which is north of Crni Kal 3.5 km (1.4 mi) on Hwy 627. The campsite is at the base of a famous climbing rock. We marked Osp on our map with a waypoint symbol in case you prefer to camp.



Distance: 30 km (19 mi)
Gain=800 m (2625 ft)
Loss=314 m (1030 ft)
Max 501 m (1644 ft)

Route C-Stage 1

Koper to Kozina



Route C-Stage 2

Kozina to Storje

Distance: 39 km (24 mi)
Gain=367 m (1204 ft)
Loss=527 m (1729 ft)
Max=559 m (1834 ft)

Kozina is the high point of today's ride. From Kozina, we cycle beautiful highway route 409. It is wide enough for bikes to be comfortable with cars. Lots of day cyclists use this route. For Slovenia, it is almost flat!



A stop at Skocjan Caves is highly recommended. The guided tours follow the Reka River underground. (See next page for details.)

From Skocjan caves, stay on 409 towards Divaca, turning west on 205 to Lokev. Cycle quiet roads to Lipica, the Lipizzaner stud farm. The route goes right through the pastures. Horses and young foals are in the fields. Guided tours of the farm are available. Also

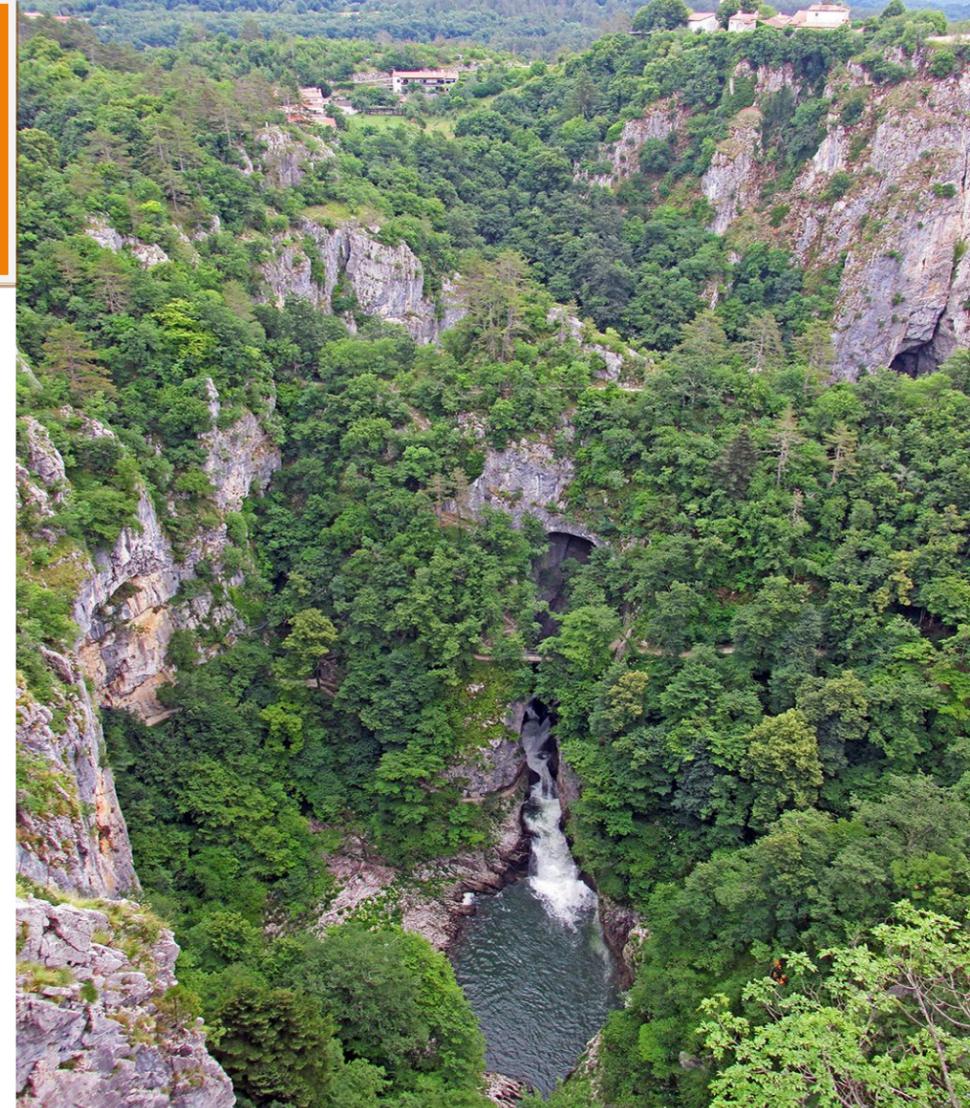
schedules and tickets to performances, and even riding lessons: http://www.slovenia.info/en/Towns/Lipica-Stud-Farm.htm?_ctg_kraji=5056&lng=2

Lipica has no camping amenities but lodging is available. No groceries but there is a restaurant.

After Lipica, the route intersects with 934 to Sezana. Sezana has all amenities except camping.

We picked up 445 from Sezana and cycled a delicious section of rolling hills through lovely countryside. As we approached Storje, we came across a new campground named Brajda: (brajda.bb@gmail.com) 8 Euro per person.

The camp offered a well maintained grassy parcel for tents and very nice rooms for rent. Brajda was not on the internet or maps as of this writing. The friendly hosts welcomed us with a carafe of wine! There was a reasonably priced restaurant with delicious food just up the street. There is no grocery store in Storje. Do your shopping in Sezana.



2 Skocjan Viewpoint
3 Brajda Camp



Route C-Stage 2-Kozina to Storje

Side Trip to Skocjan

The intersection to Skocjan is well marked. It is 3 kilometers downhill from 409 to Skocjan Caves. Visits to the caves are by guided tour and take about 2 hours. During the high season tours go every hour. <http://www.park-skocjanske-jame.si/en/read/tourist-information/skocjan-caves-guided-tours>

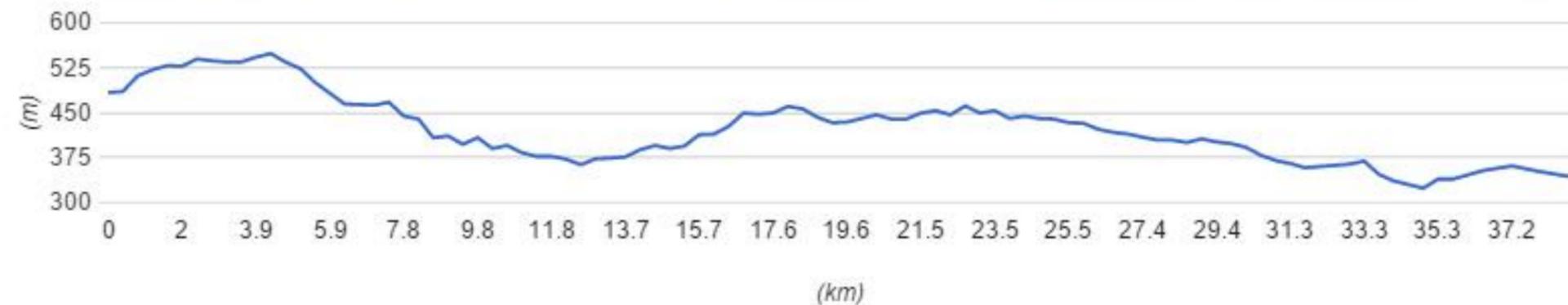
If you decide not to take the guided tour, there is a short walk to a spectacular viewpoint.

There is a restaurant. No camping, but there are Apartments close by.

We rode an additional 3 kilometers downhill from Skocjan to a camp on the Reka River. Incredibly scenic ride on good road. Camp Dujceva in the town of Skoflje is very picturesque.

<http://www.dujceva.si/>

If you arrive too early, no one is there and you need to call them. Tele number on door (+386 31 786 125). Very, very steep descent to the river campsite from the reception. They serve dinner, but no stores in the area.



Download

Route C Stage 3

Storje to Kanal

Distance: 65 km (40 mi)

Gain=411 m (1348 ft)

Loss=695 m (2280 ft)

Max=367 m (1204 ft)

Fantastic ride almost entirely on secondary roads. No traffic. Saw lots of cyclists on racing bikes. Many routes to choose from in this area where cyclists ride back roads. Beautiful scenery.

Highlight of the day: Walled hill town of Stanjel is a great place to explore on foot.

(<http://www.slovenia.info/?grad=3682>)



Checked out camping at Lijak. Very old complex with nothing of interest nearby. Nova Gorica was 3 kilometers further on. Nova Gorica has all amenities including big shopping mall. In process of developing more cycle paths through the town.

Stopped at Bike Hotel Sabina. These bicycle hotels are listed in the bicycling map of Slovenia. The hotels are supposed to be an information center for cyclists. But, the **lady at reception didn't know anything. Only map they had** was the same biking Slovenian we already had. They had none of the usual local maps. We decided to go on to Kanal.

Nova Gorica is where we first meet the Soca River. It is a beautiful ride along Soca river from Nova Gorica onward. Easy riding on new highway but there was tons of traffic heading north towards the Alps. It was the weekend!

Kanal is a charming town on the river. Very picturesque. The town offers lodging, restaurants and groceries. Camping is on north side of town at the gas station. Very nice grassy sites with views of river. A view restaurant serves delicious food.

4-Stangel



5-Stangel Castle Entrance

¹ Photo 4-"Štanjel view at village 06072008 00" by Johann Jaritz - Own work. Licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 via Commons -

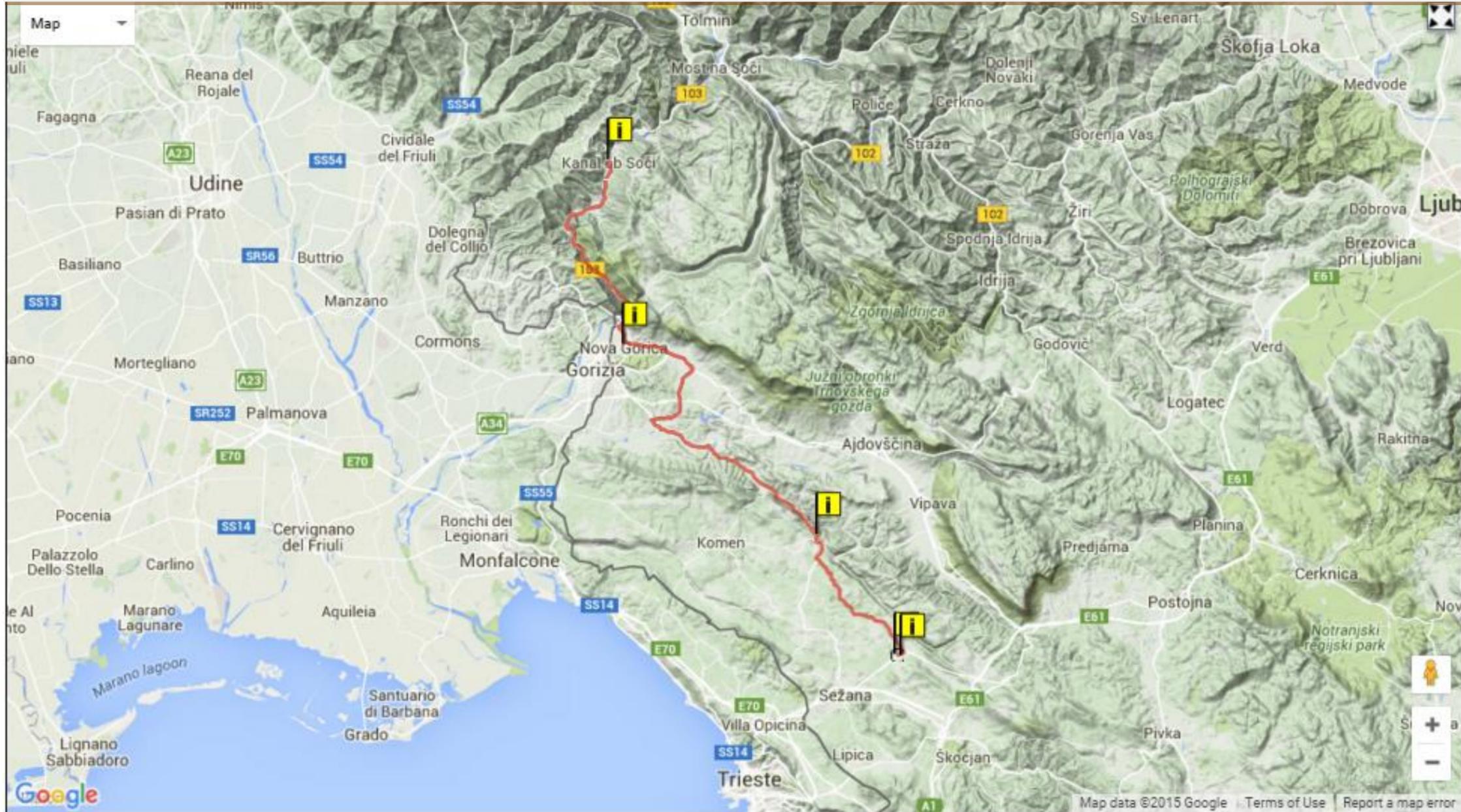
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:%C5%A0tanjel_view_at_village_06072008_00.jpg#/media/File:%C5%A0tanjel_view_at_village_06072008_00.jpg

Photo 5-"Štanjel Burg Innenhof Treppe 06072008 04" by Johann Jaritz - Own work. Licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 via Commons -

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:%C5%A0tanjel_Burg_Innenhof_Treppe_06072008_04.jpg#/media/File:%C5%A0tanjel_Burg_Innenhof_Treppe_06072008_04.jpg

Route C-Stage 3

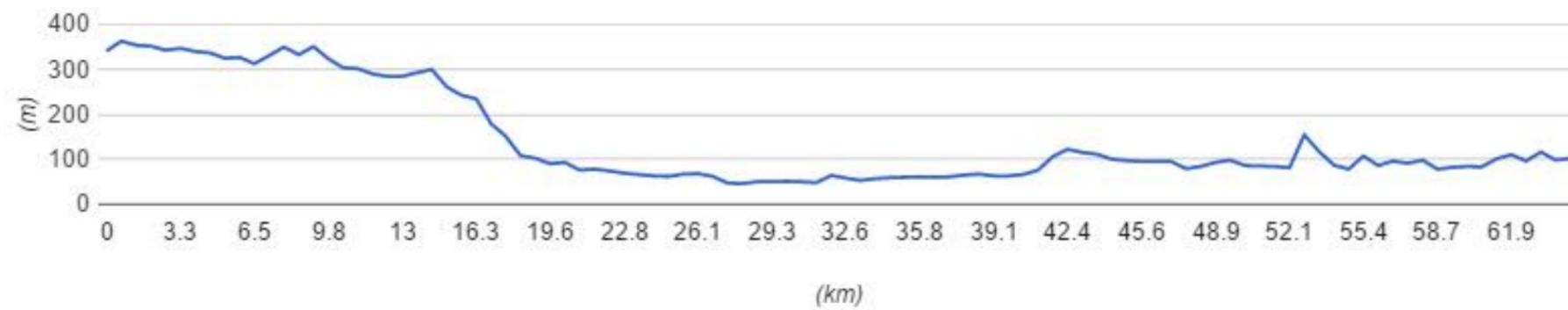
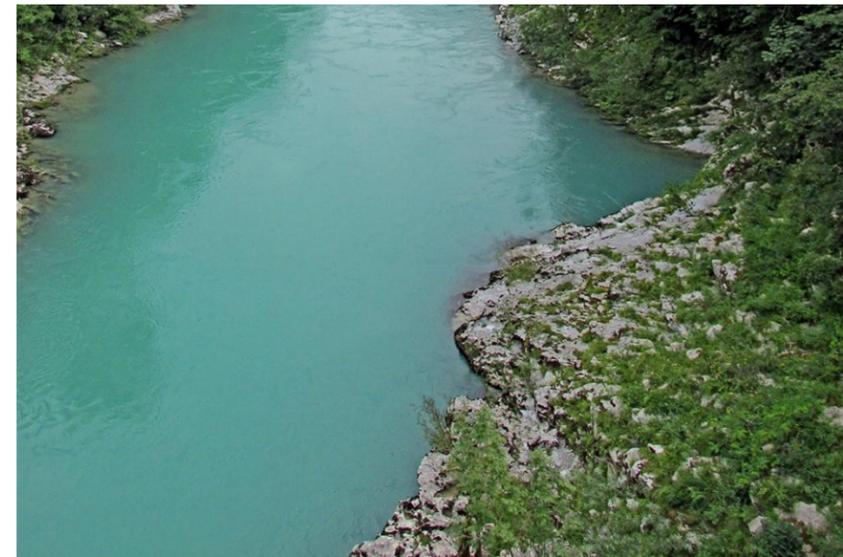
Storie to Kanal



6-Soca River



7-Quiet secondary road from Kanal thru Avce



Route C-Stage 4

Kanal to Tolmin to Kobarid

Distance: 36 km (22 mi)
Gain=471 m (1545 ft)
Loss=423 m (1387 ft)
Max=242 m (794 ft)

There is a secondary road on the east side of the river that is scenic and quiet and avoids part of the main highway 103. Go into the town of Kanal. Gradnikova Ulica goes north near the river through the village Avce before dropping steeply down to cross the river and climb steeply back up to highway 103. The lack of traffic is worth the short climb. Once back on the highway, there are increasingly stunning views of the Alps. The village of Volce is exceptionally scenic as the river valley opens to a wide view of the mountains. There are rooms, Apartments and restaurants in Volce.



9-Volce

From Tolmin, the hwy number changes to 102. There is a fantastic secondary road on the east side of the Soca river. Access is by descending down into Tolmin, and cycling straight up the hill about a kilometer.

An easier access to this quiet road is to stay on the main highway 102 and not go into Tolmin at all. Cross at the first bridge you come to into the village of Volarge and follow the secondary road all the way to Kobarid. This is a very scenic route with no traffic.

Crossing the Napoleon Bridge into Kobarid, stop to view the lovely Soca River. At the bridge is access to two campgrounds: Kamp Karen and Camp Lazar. Camp Karen climbs the hill just a short distance in the direction of Dresnica on the east side of the bridge. The kamp is 4 star and has every amenity one could imagine.

We chose Kamp Lazar on the west side of the river. It is less than a kilometer and is a small campground with a lovely natural feeling. Excellent restaurant but no store. From Kamp Lazar, there is a hike up a tributary stream to a nice waterfall.

For groceries, go into Kobarid from Napoleon Bridge about one kilometer.

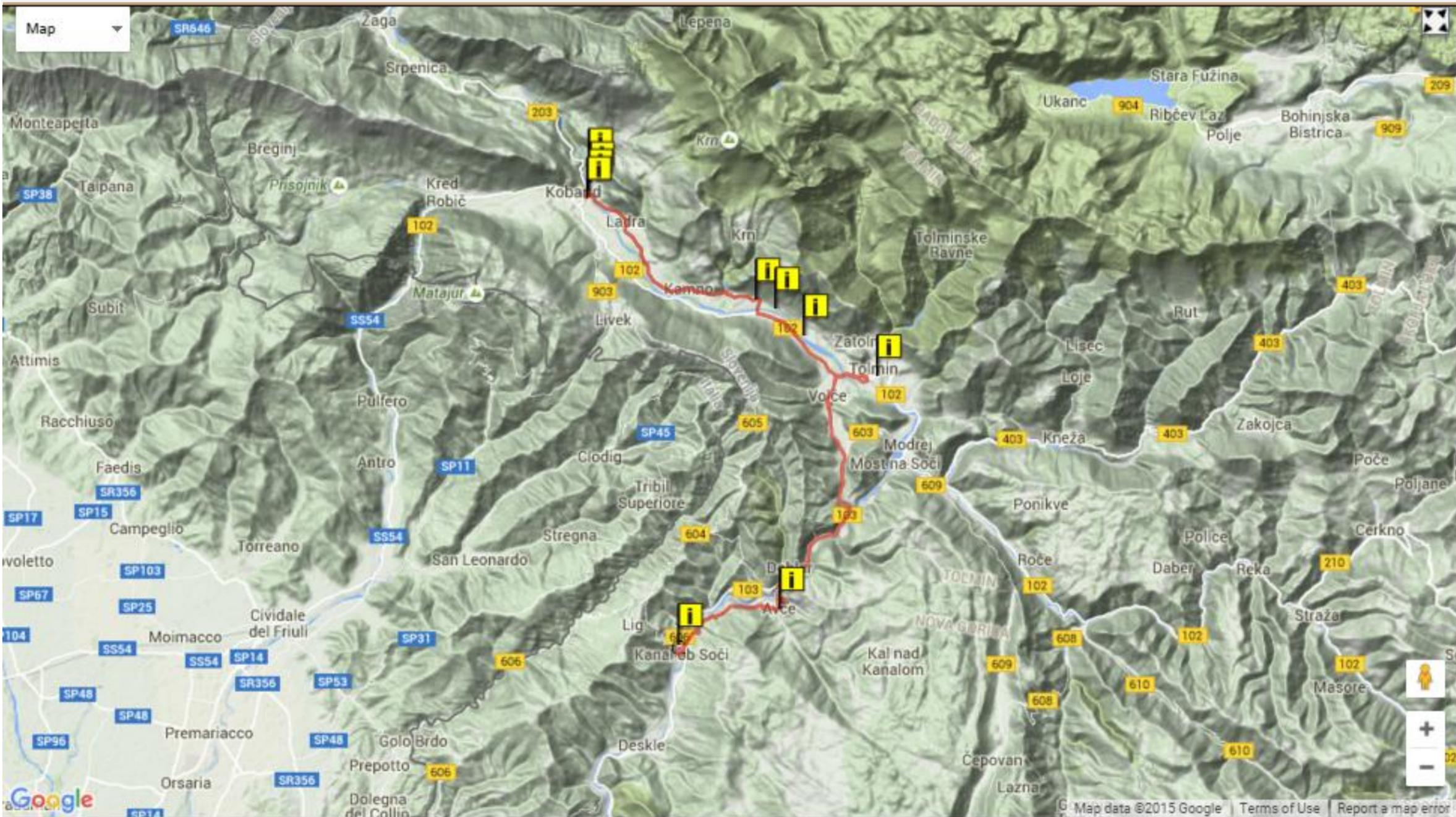


8-Views of the Alps



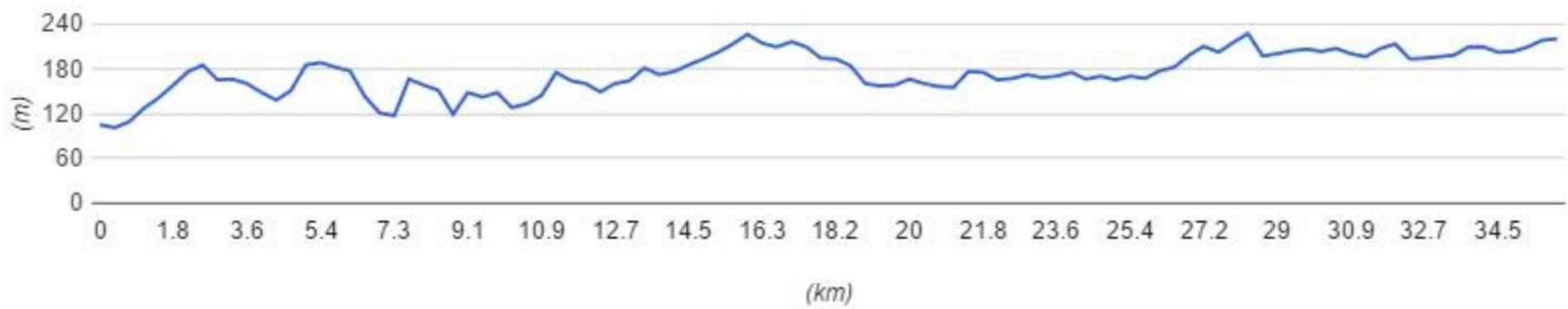
Route C-Stage 4

Kanal to Tolmin to Kobarid



10-Soca River from Napoleon Bridge

11-Day hike from Kamp Lazar



Route C-Stage 5

Kobarid to Bovec to Soca

Distance: 32 km (20 mi)

Gain=575 m (1886 ft)

Loss=351 m (1152 ft)

Max=484 m (1588 ft)

Superb cycling on a fun, not difficult, mountain road along the Soca River. Lots of day cyclists also use this route. Many come from Italy. Spectacular views of the Alps after Bovec.

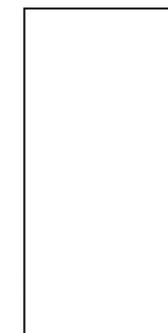
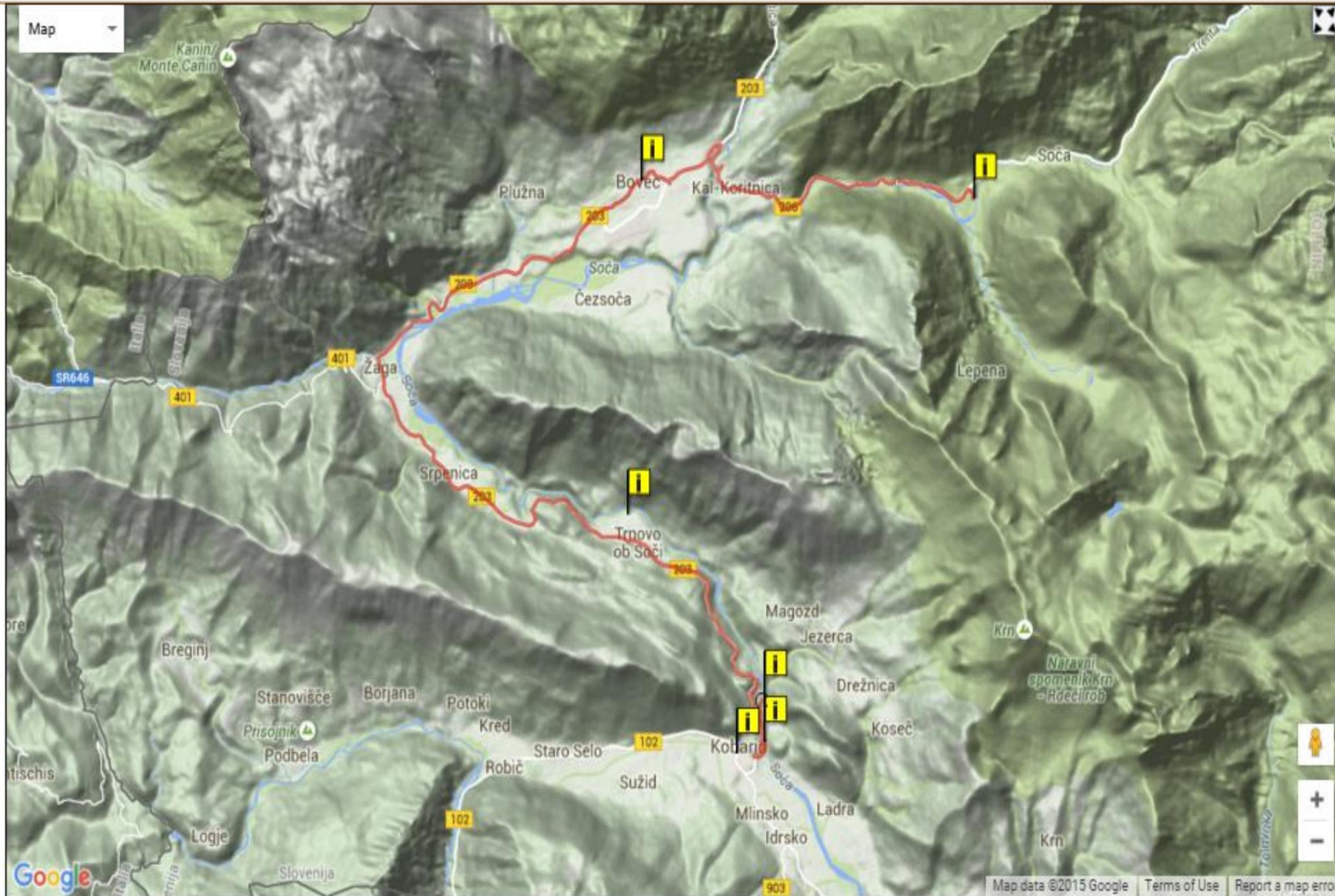
Bovec is another charming mountain town. Three markets in Bovec, lots of lodging choices. Restaurants, bicycle and hiking maps at info in center of town. Do any shopping for food in Bovec for best choices. After Bovec, leave 203 and follow 206. There are 2 camping sites near Bovec on 206. Both are on the Soca River. The first has only a coffee shop. The second campground, camping Klin, has a restaurant. Both have a tiny selection of drinks in a shop. We chose camping Klin.



12-Camping Klin

Route C-Stage 5

Kobarid to Soca



Route C-Stage 6

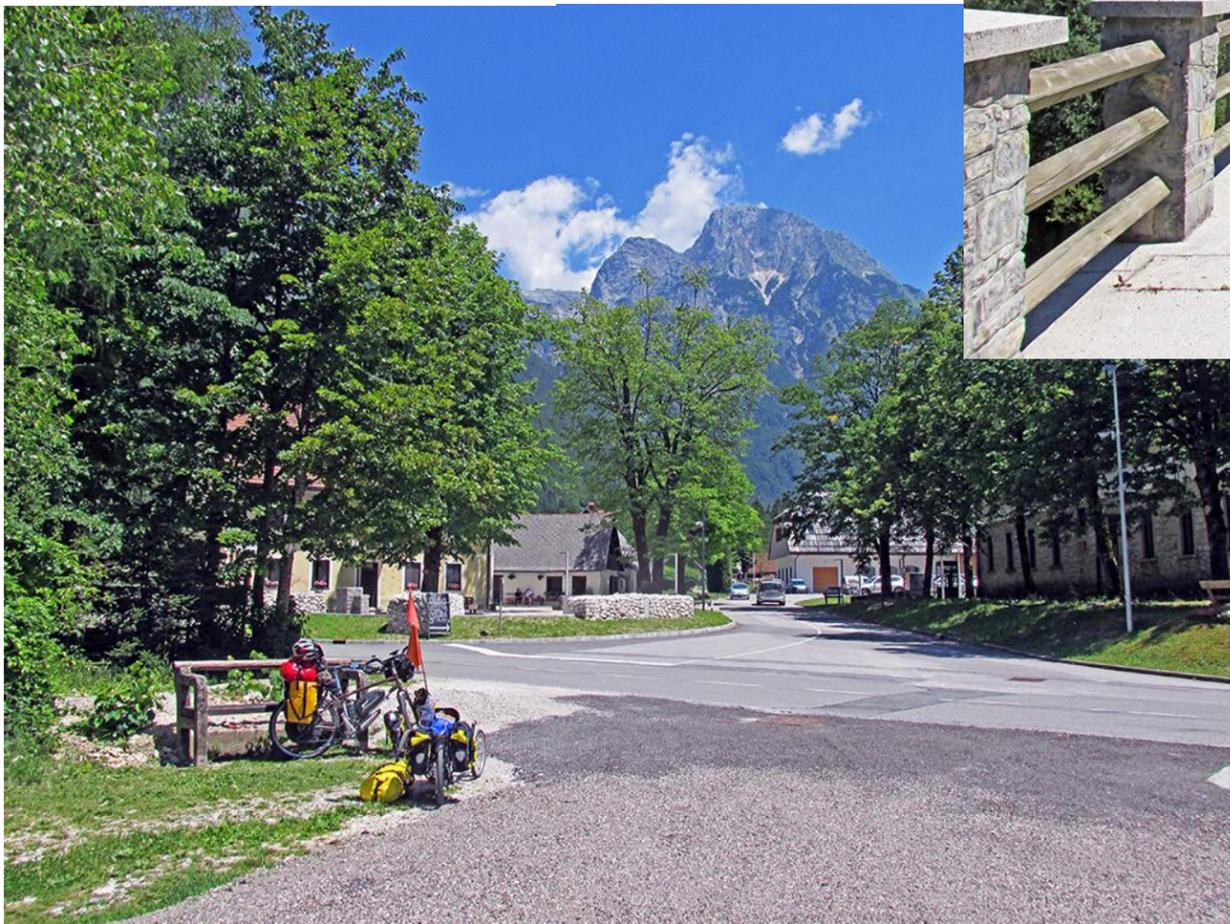
Soca to Trenta

Distance: 12 km (7 mi)
Gain=218 m (715 ft)
Loss=33 m (108 ft)
Max=620 m (2034 ft)

This is a spectacular ride with amazing views of the Alps. Good road, not much traffic during the week. There are 2 campsites, one below and one above Trenta. Both have restaurants, but with minimal choice. Both are on the river with great views. Small and hospitable. We chose the camp above Trenta. (<http://www.soca-trenta.si/EN/default.asp?id=93>). We wanted to be as close to Vrsic Pass as possible. We would ascend the next morning, hopefully fresh and ready after a leisurely day from Soca to Trenta.

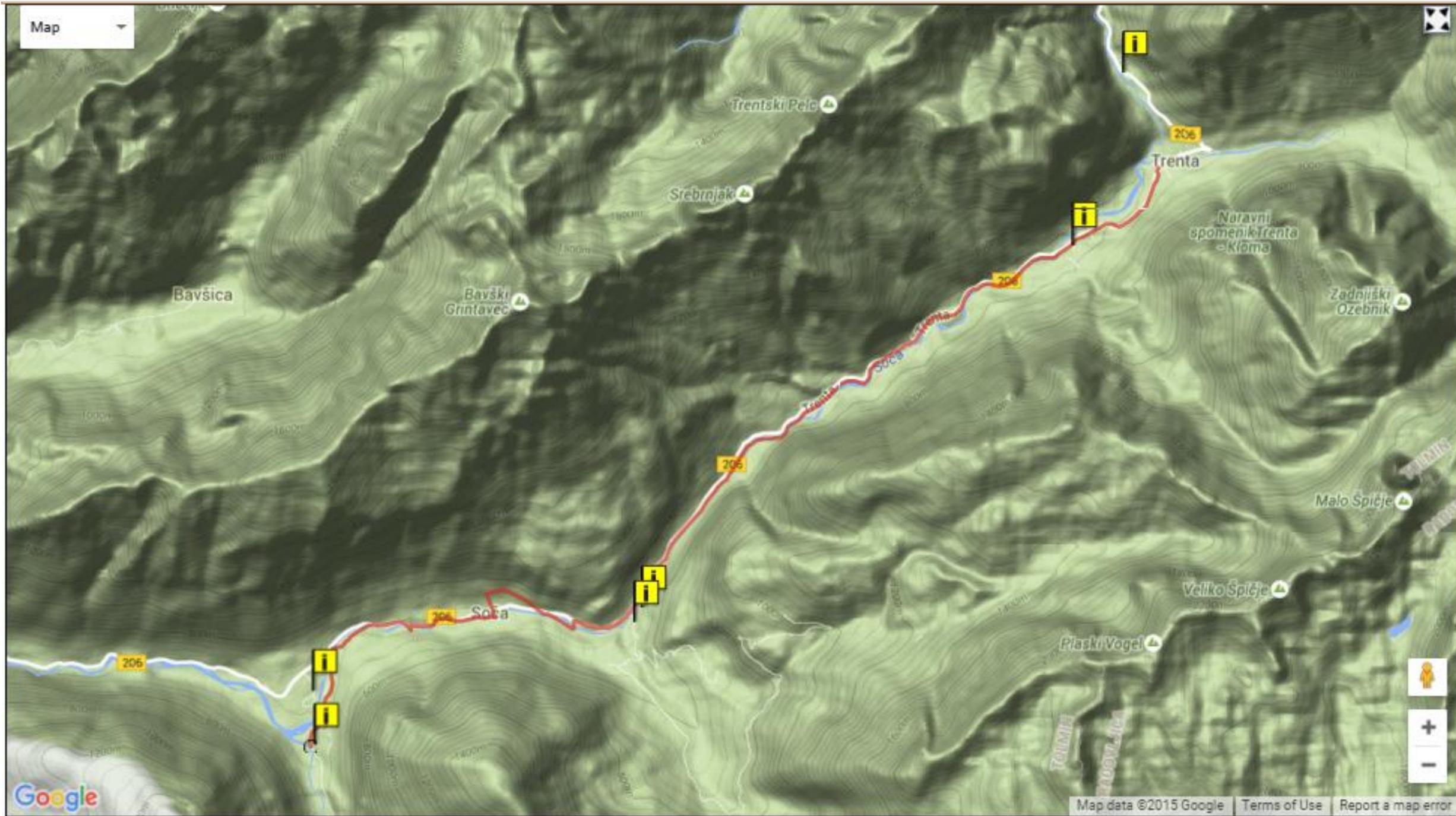
There is an excellent small grocery in Trenta and restaurant and bar. Tiny town but lovely setting.

13-Trenta

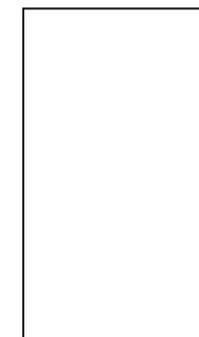
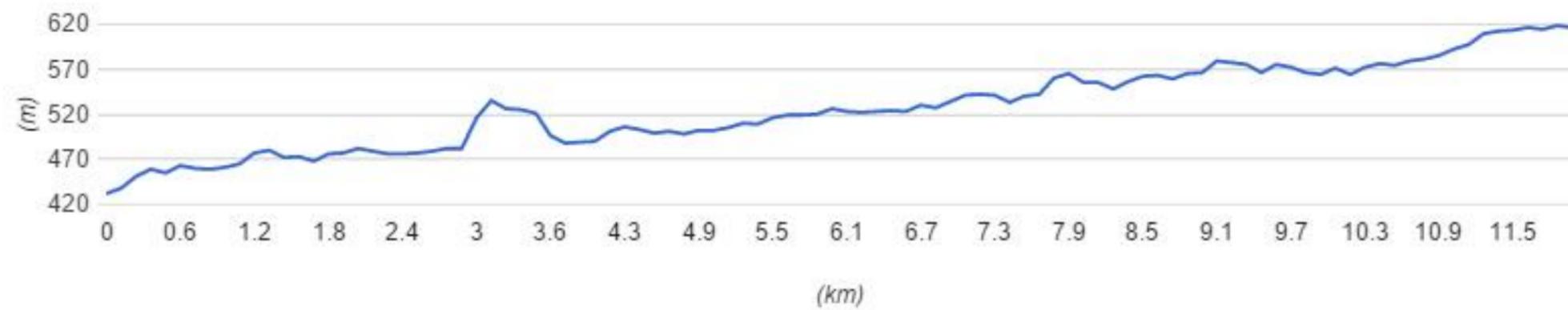


Route C-Stage 6

Soca to Trenta



14-Kamp Trenta





Route C-Stage 7
Trenta to Kranska Gora over Vrsic Pass

Distance: 23 km (14 mi)
Gain=929 m (3047 ft)
Loss=774 m (2539 ft)
Max=1611 m (5285 ft)

We arranged through the campsite to hire a car for 15 Euro to drive our luggage to the top of the pass and meet us there. Apparently, the restaurant is very receptive to holding bike luggage for cyclists.

We have plenty of climbing partners. This is a very popular challenge for cyclists of all levels, especially neighboring Italians on light weight racing bikes. We saw one other touring cyclist. He carried his own luggage all the way. Bravo!

Vrsic is the highest pass in Slovenia. A sign warns of 14% grade for the next 9 km (5.5 mi). We climb 993 m (3258 ft) in 12 km (7.4 mi) around 26

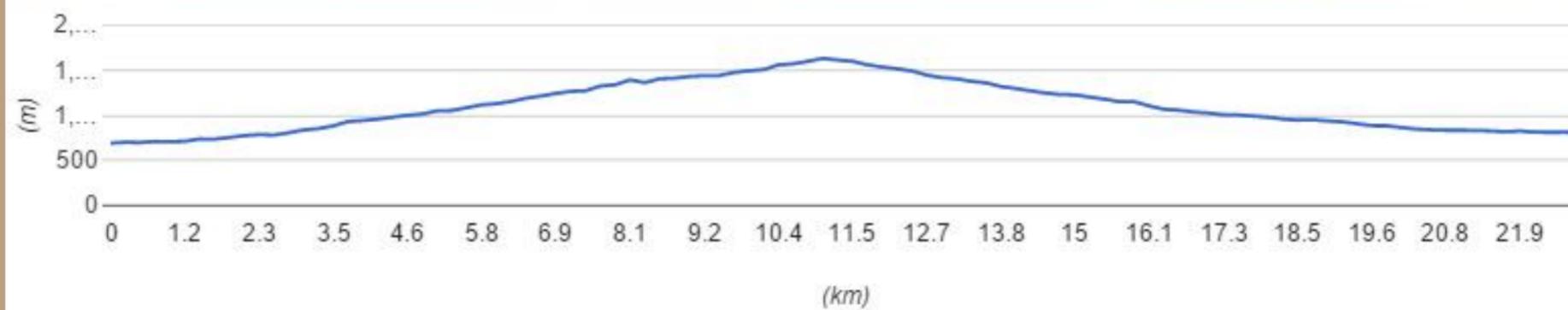


switchbacks to reach the top. It is a steady climb all the way. Paving is smooth. Views are fantastic of the Soca valley below. We ascend slowly, but steadily. Our motors enable us to maintain our pace, although by the time I reached the top, my legs were quite done in!



Route C-Stage 7

Trenta to Kranjska Gora over Vrsic Pass





At Vrsic Pass there is a restaurant with rooms to let. Very good food and nice rooms if you got a late start and are tired.

We made the pass with two bars to spare on our batteries. Guess we have been getting stronger and not recognized the fact. Still, we charged up at the restaurant while enjoying lunch on the patio. Hikers and cyclists alike swapped tales of their latest achievements. There were folks from all around the world enjoying this spectacular pass.



In our opinion, it is best to ascend the south side and descend the north. The north side road surface is heavily patched and all the switchbacks are exposed the original cobblestones when the road was first built. This is jarring and rough and to ascend would add that much more resistance.

The north side has the more spectacular scenery with sharp peaks dominating the view. The descent is equally steep as the climb. A tour bus was too long to make a switchback and got hung up on the cobblestones.

We descended slowly, recharging our batteries, snapping photos at every turn. This was our reward for making the climb and we were going to enjoy it.



Of all the pretty towns and villages we visited on our tour around Slovenia, Kranjska Gora was our favorite. On the approach to town from the pass are two man-made lakes that are simply lovely.

The town feels small for a busy tourist mecca that attracts cyclists and hikers during the summer. Indeed, trekking into the mountains is a favored activity. Charming pensions, cafes, restaurants abound. One could easily stay for days.

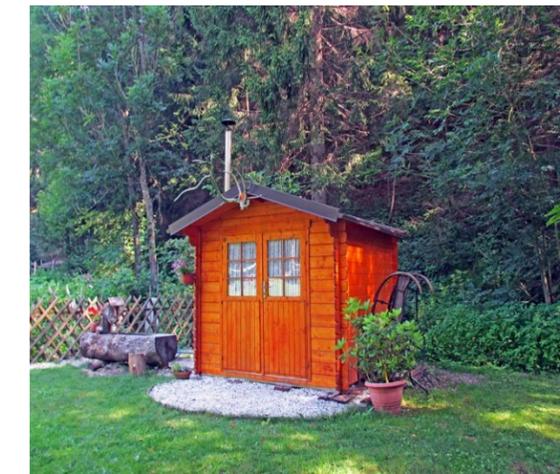
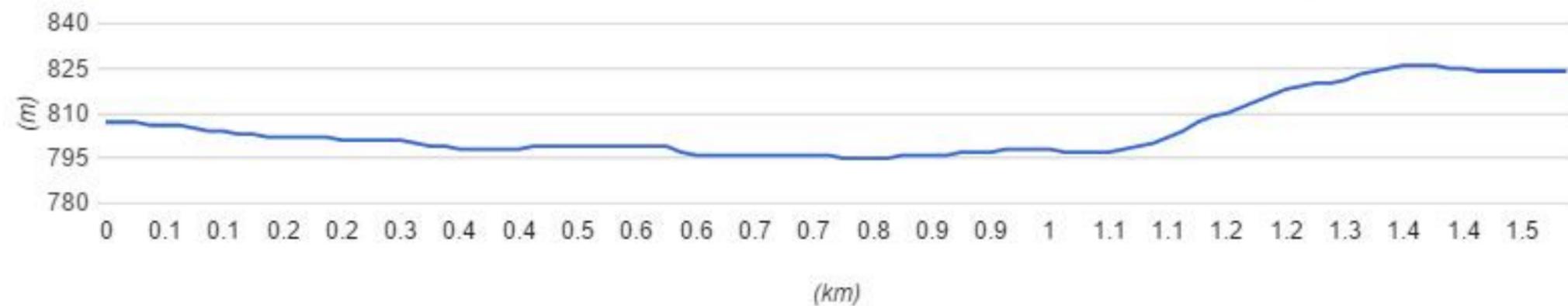
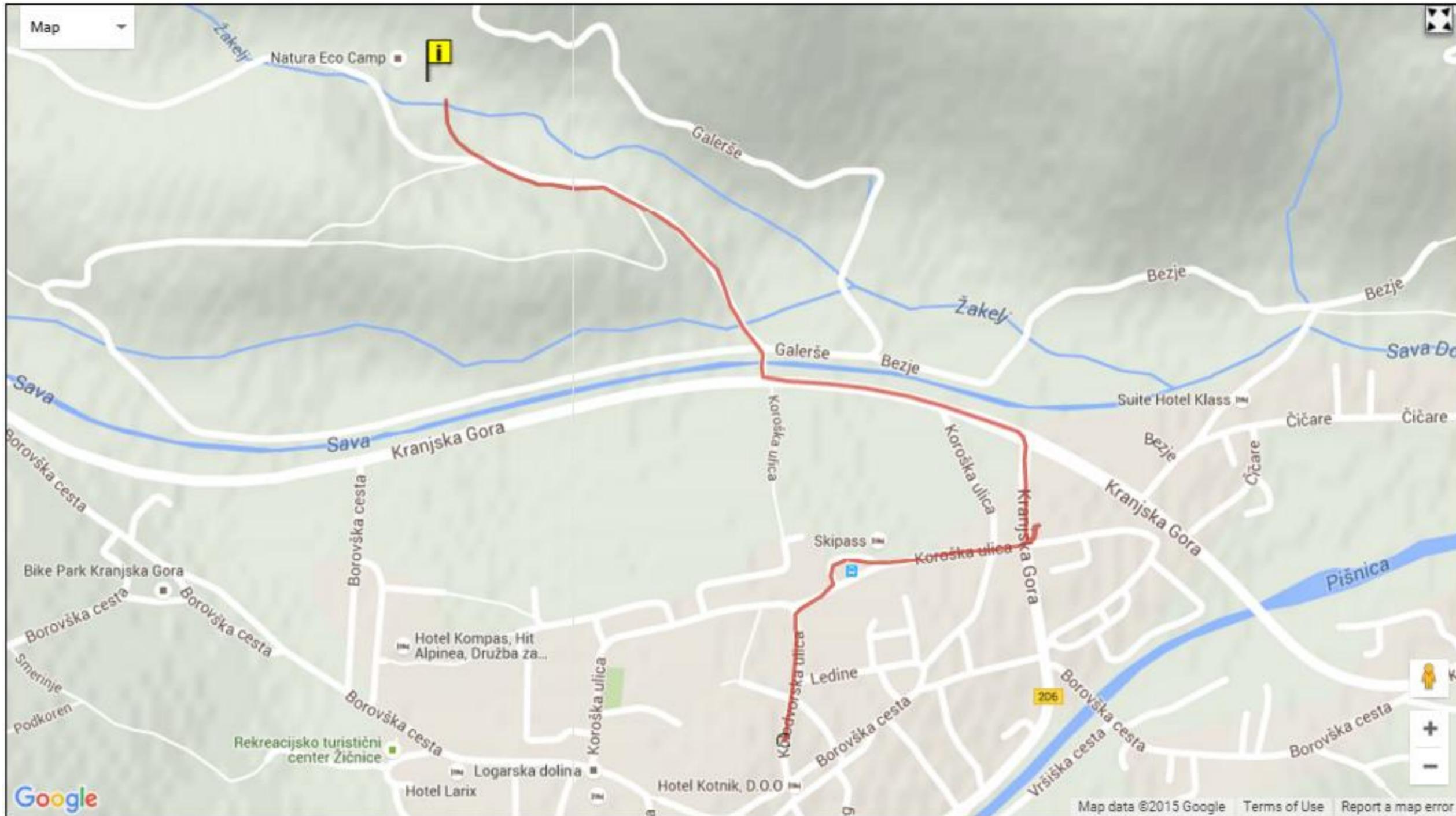


Route C-Stage 7A-Kranska Gora to Camping

Nature Eco Camp

The only camping near Kranska Gora is about 2 kilometers from town on a paved to gravel road.

The site has no public power, although we plugged into the host's cabin. There is no drinking water available either.



Route D-Complete

Kranska Gora to Ljubljana

Distance: 204 km (126 mi)

Gain=2922 m (9586 ft)

Loss=3676 m (12,060 ft)

Max=1170 m (3838 ft)

Parts of this route are absolutely amazing cycling. Look at the math in the right hand box. A total elevation loss of 3676 meters (12,060 ft) is part of the reason this is so much fun.

There are sections that follow a long and scenic bicycle path; other sections follow quiet roads through incredibly scenic valleys.

Consider taking Stage 1A, a hilly but quiet, scenic route that bypasses the industrial city of Jesenice.

Lake Bled (<http://www.slovenia.info/?jezero=190>) is the tourist hub of Slovenia and it feels like it. Still, the campground is pleasant and there is a bicycle path that goes most of the way around the famous lake.

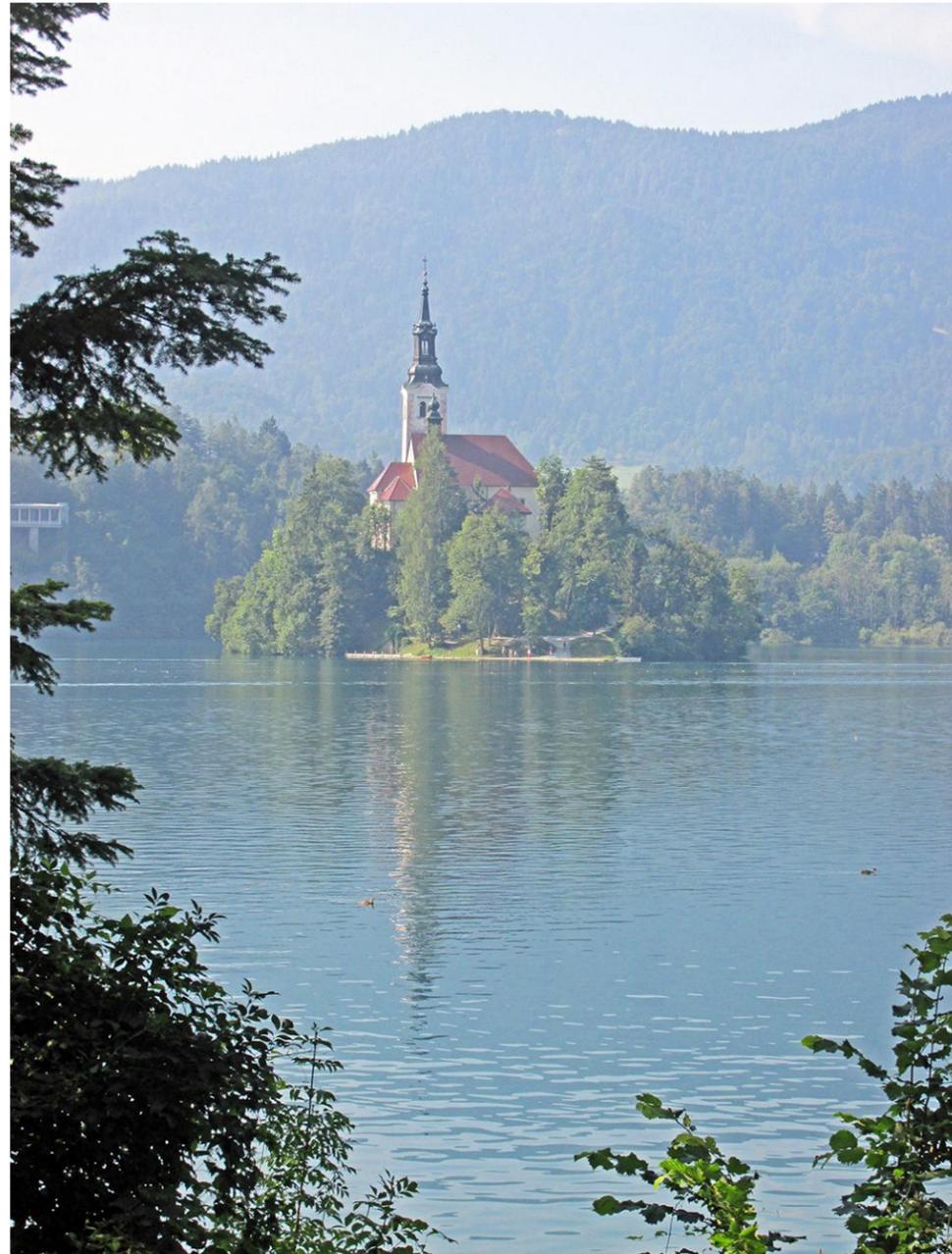
Lake Bohinj offers a much quieter atmosphere than Lake Bled; the cable car ride (<http://www.vogel.si/summer/options/cable-car-ride>) at the end of the lake is well worth the time. Hiking trails make a

great diversion from cycling. We found a fabulous day ride on paved bicycle paths near Bohinjska Bistrica that visits small villages above Lake Bohinj.

Our most favorite ride was from Bohinjska Bistrica to Skofja Loka. Traffic was nil on this mountain road that climbed to a pass and floated downhill for miles through stunning countryside before the long downhill run to Skofja Loka.

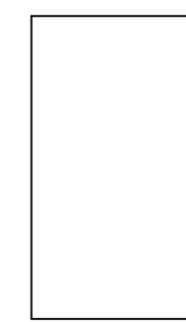
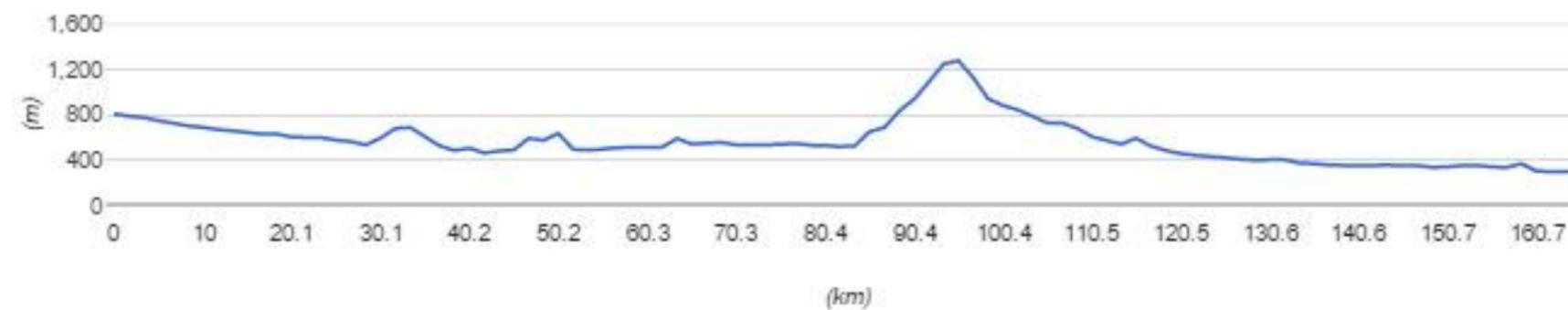
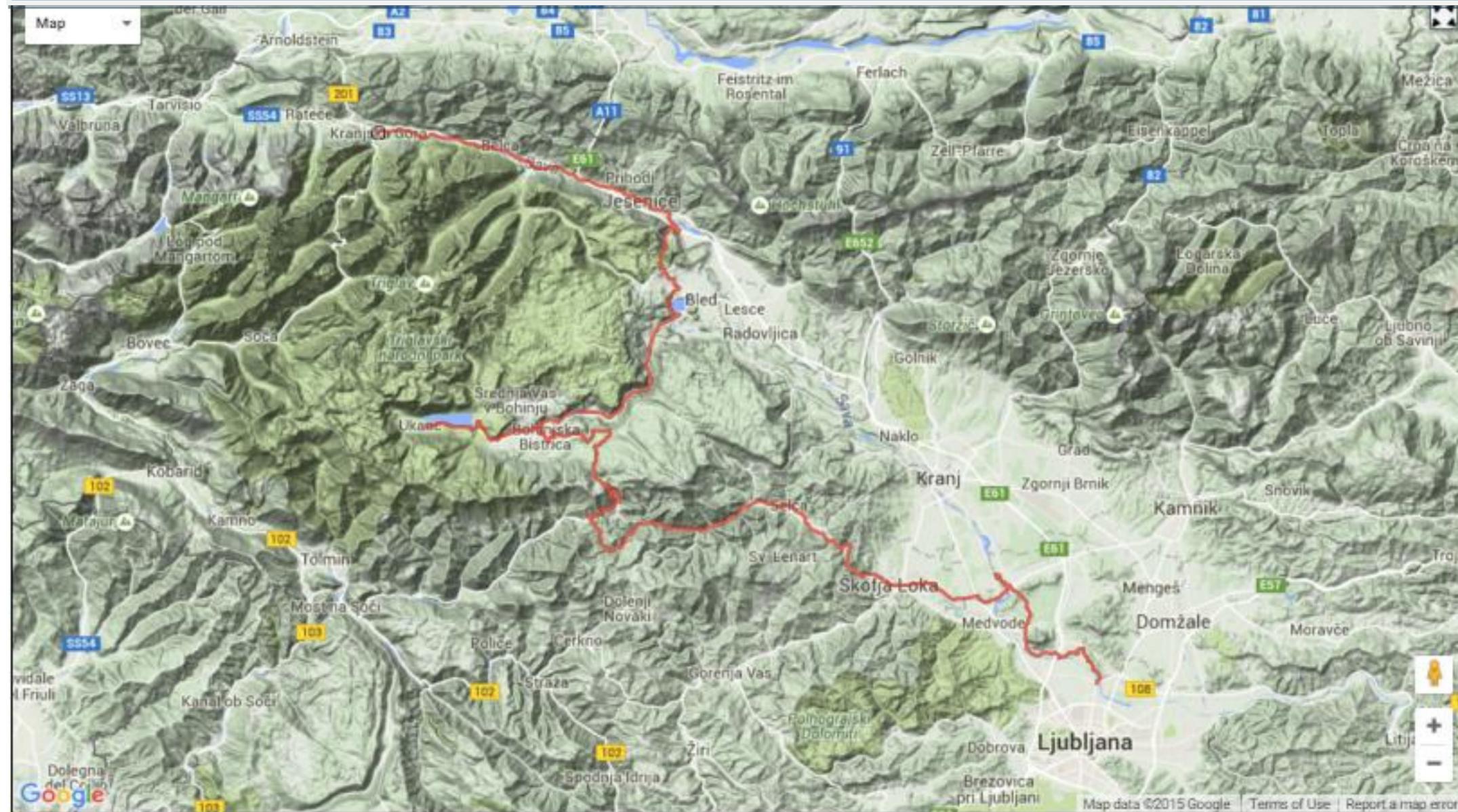
Skofja Loka (<http://www.slovenia-trips.com/eng/cultural-sights/trip/1050/Skofja-loka>) has one of the best-preserved medieval urban centers in Slovenia.

Now, closing in on Ljubljana, traffic necessarily intensifies. Still, we found several ways to get around much of it. All in all, this is a route that shows off what Slovenia has to offer.



15-Lake Bled

Route D-Complete Kranska Gora to Ljubljana



Route D-Stage 1

Kranska Gora to Lake Bled via Jesenice

Distance: 38 km (24 mi)

Gain=278 m (912 ft)

Loss=582 m (1909 ft)

Max=800 m (2625 ft)



A fabulous downhill coast all the way from Kranska Gora to Mojstrana on a bicycle path that is paved and separated from the traffic. Look for D2 bicycle route when leaving town. The local map given out by the tourist bureau shows the path.

From Mojstrana, there are two choices to go to Bled: continue due east and feed into highway 201 to Jesenice or turn due south towards Zgornja Radovna.

The route east towards Jesenice is relatively flat but not very scenic and the highway carries a lot of traffic. See Stage 1A on the next page for a more scenic option with little traffic.

Camping Bled is directly at the bottom of the final descent. There are restaurants and a small grocery store by the entrance.

Camping Bled holds 1600 sites. But, it is well organized and quite pleasant. A swimming beach is right off the entrance.

Bled is much more crowded and more commercial feeling than charming Kranska Gora, but the camping is much better in Bled because there is power, hot water showers and safe drinking water.

There is a cycle path that goes most of the way around the lake.



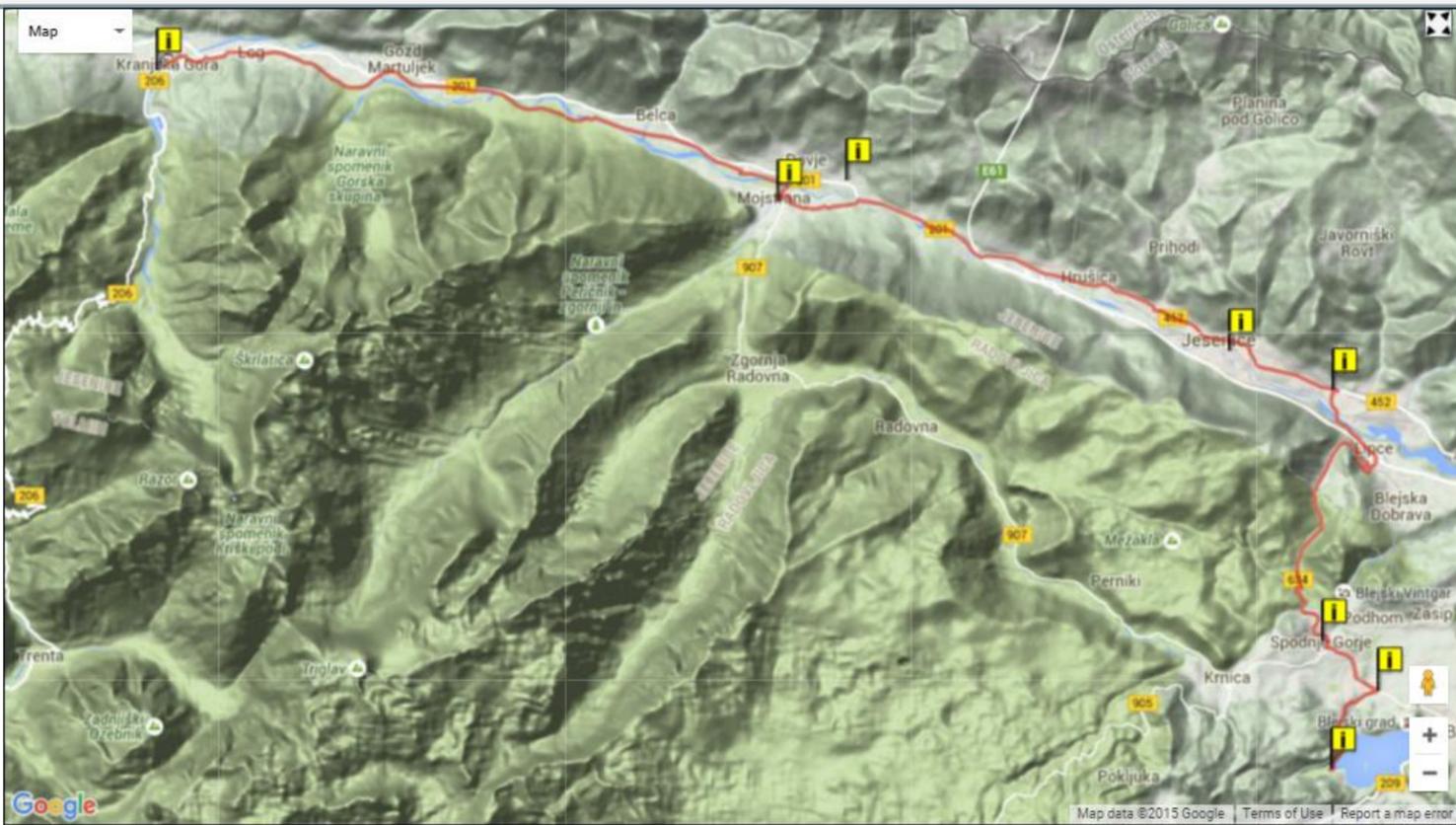
16-Bike path from Kranska Gora



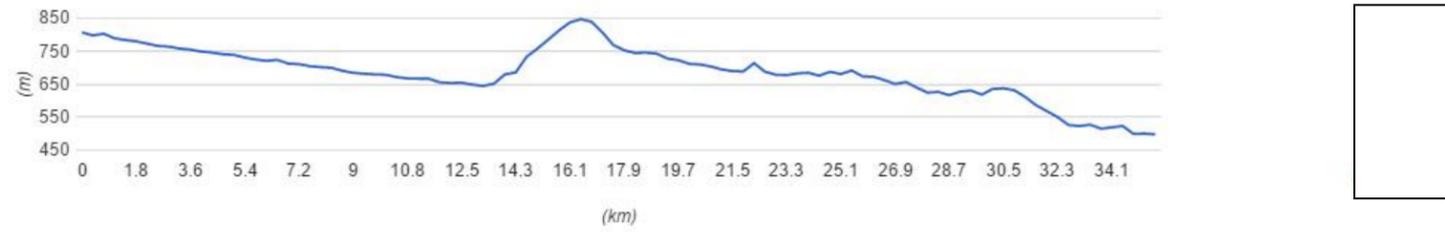
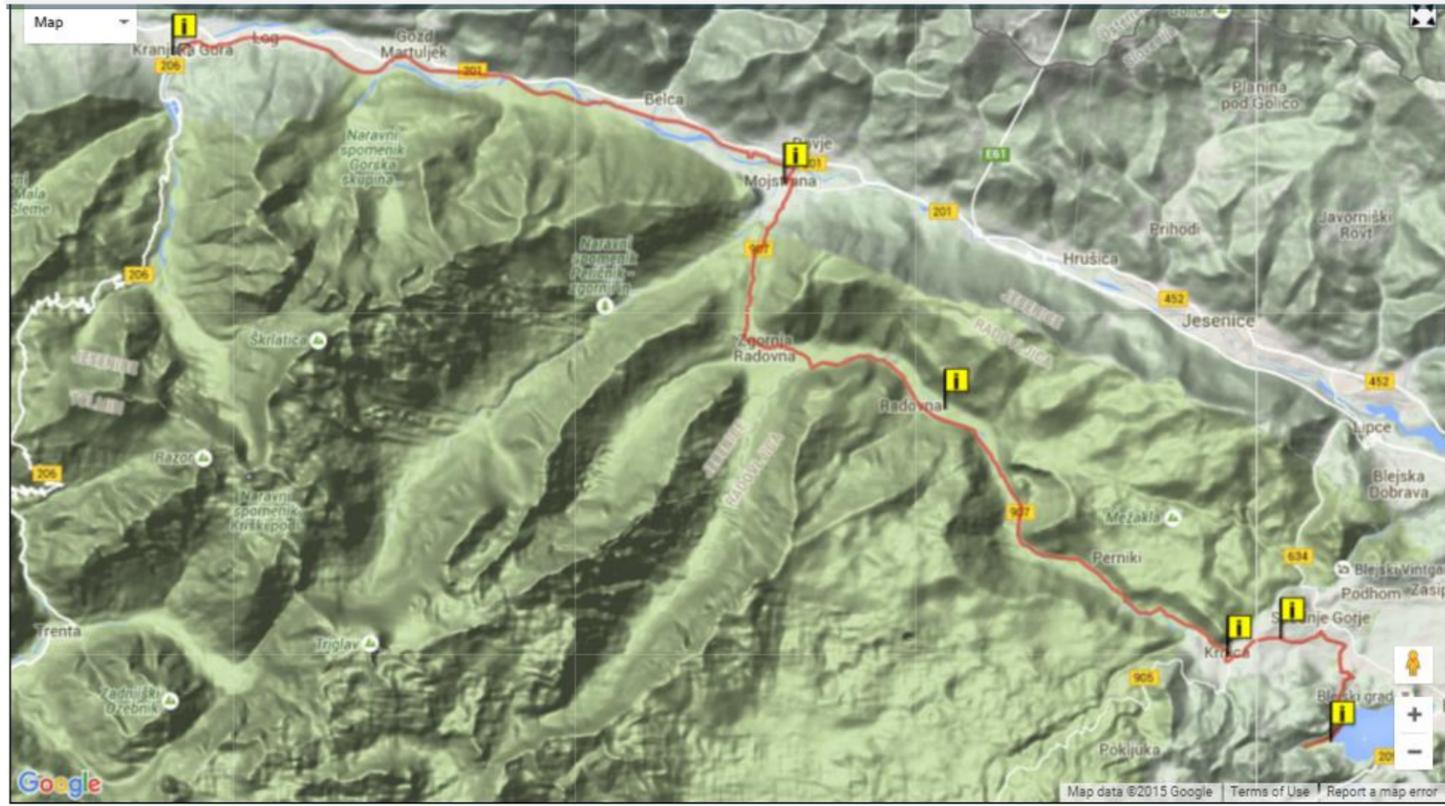
Distance: 38 km (24 mi)
Gain=278 m (912 ft)
Loss=582 m (1909 ft)
Max=800 m (2625 ft)

Distance: 36km (22mi)
Gain=609 m (1998 ft)
Loss=910 m (2985 ft)
Max=850 m (2789 ft)

Route D-Stage 1
Kranska Gora to Lake Bled Via Jesenice



Route D-Stage 1A
Kranska Gora to Lake Bled Via Radovna



As you can see, Stage 1A gains and drops about double the elevation of Stage 1. Yet, it is a much more interesting route as it winds through numerous mountain villages.



Route D-Stage 2
Lake Bled to Lake Bohinj

Distance: 32km (20 mi)
Gain=285 m (935 ft)
Loss=290 m (951 ft)
Max=543 m (1781 ft)

This is a heavily traveled road with a lot of truck and car traffic. There is really no way to avoid it until reaching the village of Bitnje. At the far western end of the village at the bridge crossing the Sava Bohinjska River, there is a dedicated bicycle path leaving the highway to the right. The sign says Kolesarska Pot indicating the beginning of this bike trail. Once on the bike path, the first bridge over the river leads to Kamp Danica, very pleasant camping on a spur of the bicycle route that leads to Bohinjska Bistrica. There is one steep, but very short ascent and descent on the path. The entire bike path is quite beautiful and quiet. It goes to Ribcev Laz and the eastern end of Lake Bohinj.



Exit the path here to go to west end of Lake Bohinj.

Ribcev Laz has all amenities including a well stocked grocery store but no camping. Camping is at the far west end of Lake Bohinj at Kamp Zlatorog .

Kamp Zlatorog is a hectic place with little organized or even bulldozed sites. Being in the National Forest, they said they were not allowed to make improvements. There is power available, a restaurant/bar but no store. Bathrooms are new. A pebble beach offers swimming in the lake. The kamp is very close to the cable car station.

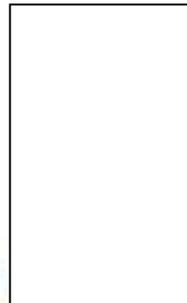
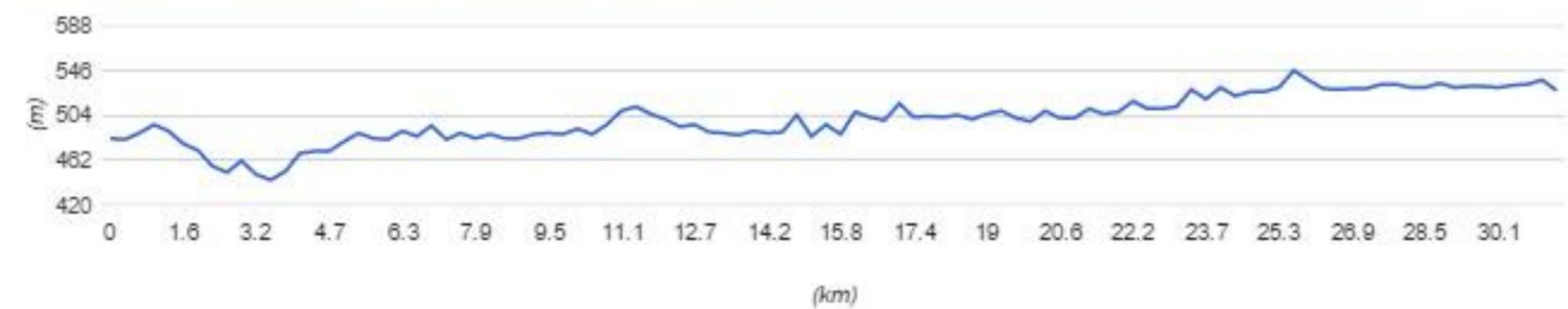


17-Lake Bohinj Vogel Cable Car



Route D-Stage 2

Lake Bled to Lake Bohinj



Route D-Stage 3

Lake Bohinj to Bohinjska Bistrica

Distance: 13km (8 mi)

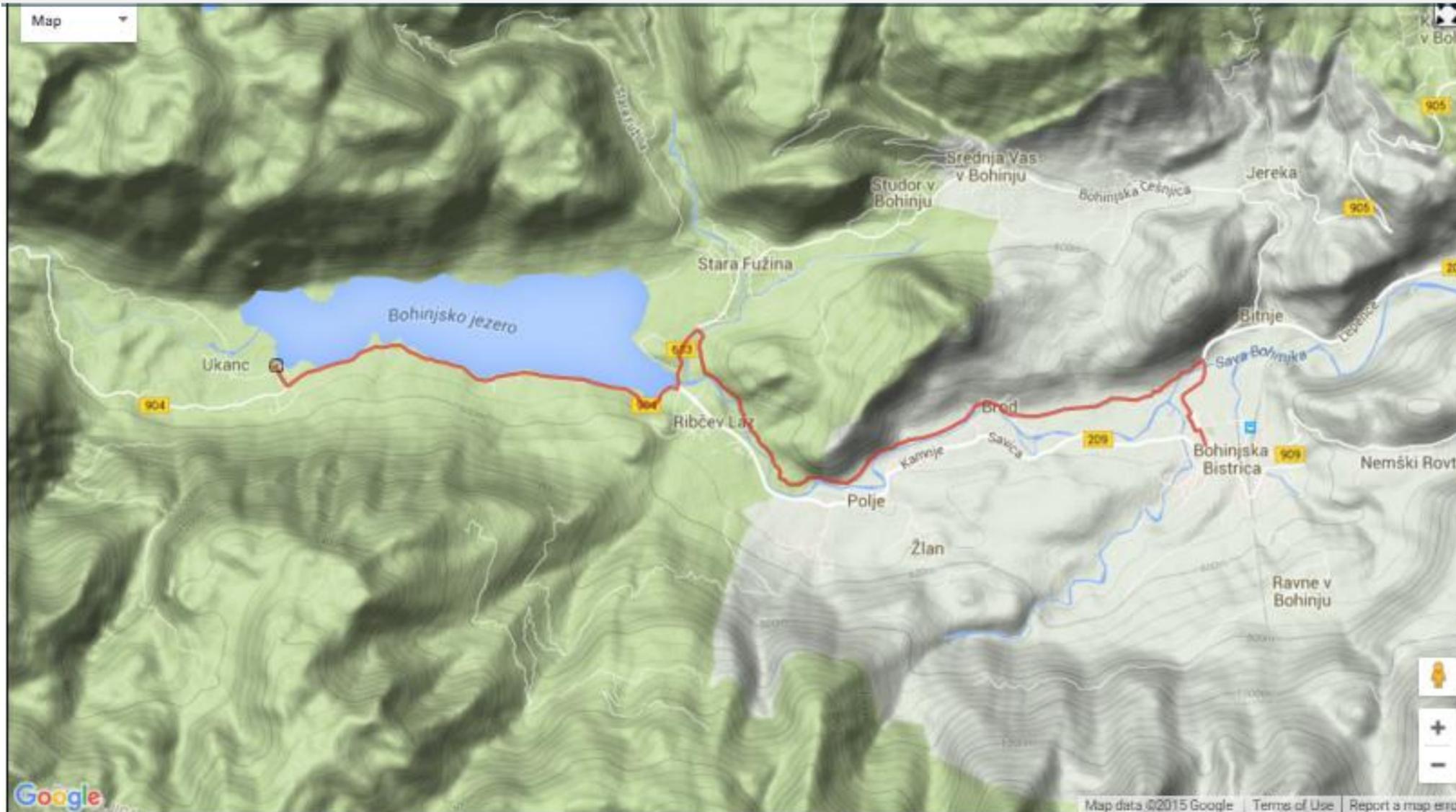
Gain=202 m (663 ft)

Loss=223 m (732 ft)

Max=543 m (1782 ft)

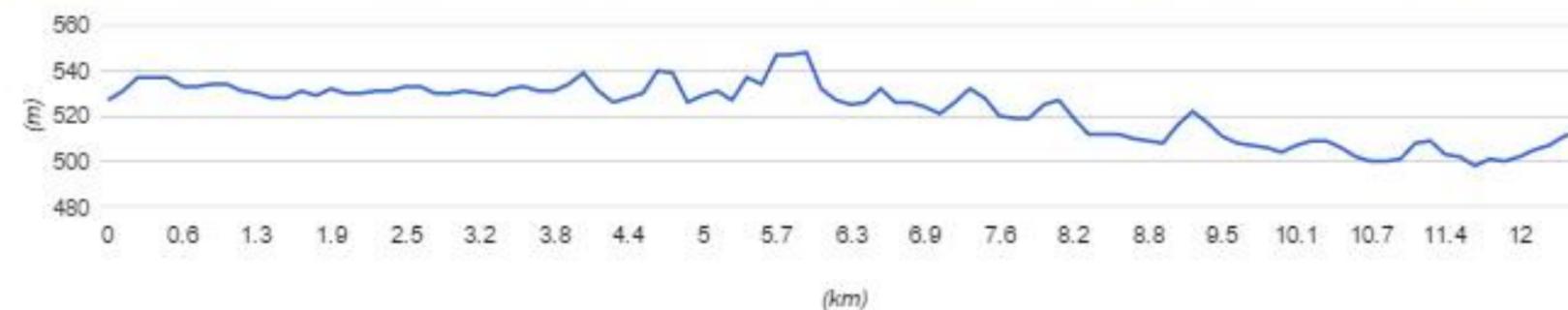
Route D-Stage 3

Lake Bohinj to Bohinjska Bistrica



We ride back from the west end of Lake Bohinj to Kamp Danica near Bohinjska Bistrica. The already familiar dedicated bicycle path Kolesarska Pot joins a secondary road to make a loop day ride through the surrounding villages. We want to ride this before leaving the lake area. It is only 9 miles around and very scenic. It also made sense to be close to Bohinjska Bistrica because it is a long ride with a lot of elevation gain the next day to Smlednik.

18-Lake Bohinj



Distance
13 km

Height
147 m

[Download](#)

Route D

Kolesarska Pot Day Ride

Distance: 15 km (9 mi)

Gain=278 m (912 ft)

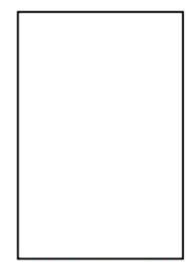
Loss=270 m (885 ft)

Max=622 m (2040 ft)



Route D

Kolesarska Pot Bohinj Day Ride



Route D-Stage 4

Bohinjska Bistrica to Smlednik

(via Soriska Planina Pass, Sorica, Petrovo Brdo, Zali Log, Zelezniki, Skofja Loka)

Sports4Fun is a rental organization just behind the Danica campground. We paid them 20 Euro to take our luggage up to the Mountain Hut Koca at Soriska Planina.

The ride up had 12% grades. Road is paved but rough condition. No views as climbing through forest. Much easier than Vrsic Pass.

Mountain hut has restaurant and bunk room lodging. Power and internet. No groceries. Many people hike around the area.

Descending the south side of the pass is fabulous. This section is a highlight of Slovenia. The views of the surrounding countryside are breathtaking. Beautiful route through scenic villages, especially Sorica. The road has nil traffic and in good condition.

Direct route to Skofja Loka was closed so we went through Petrovo Brdo. Downhill all the way to Zelezniki where it flattens out. Zelezniki to Skofja Loka gains more traffic.

Skofja Loka is a modern town that surrounds the medieval town. The old town entrance is hidden behind the bus station. You can ride your bikes into the old town as there is just one main street.

From Skofja Loka it is 10 kilometers on a busy road that leads to Highway 211 from Kranj to Ljubljana. Go under the highway to Zbilje where there is a market and follow the signs across the Sava river to Smlednik and the only camping in the area. This is the closest camping to Skofja Loka. To stay in the ancient town, you must take lodging.



Distance: 68 km (42 mi)

Gain=1057 m (3468 ft)

Loss=1182 m (3878 ft)

Max=1170 m (3838 ft)



19-Mountain Hut Koca



20-Zelezniki

Route D-Stage 4

Bohinjska Bistrica to Smlednik

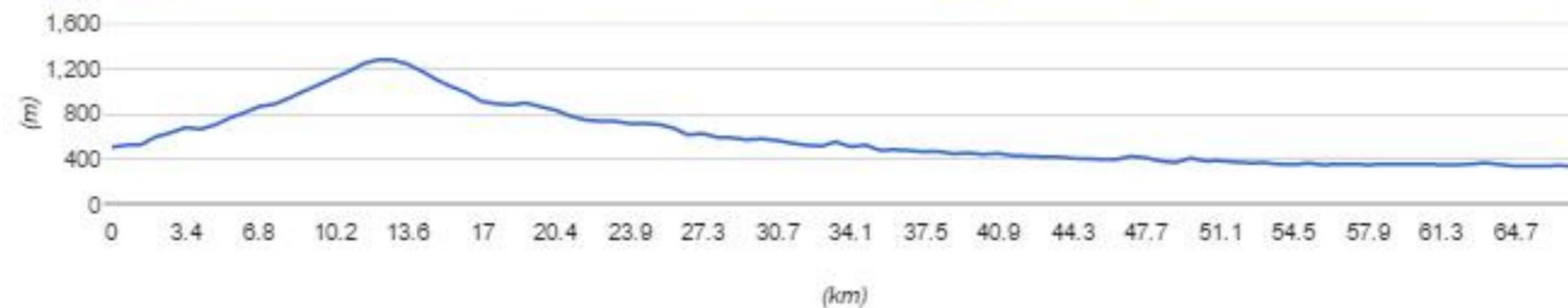
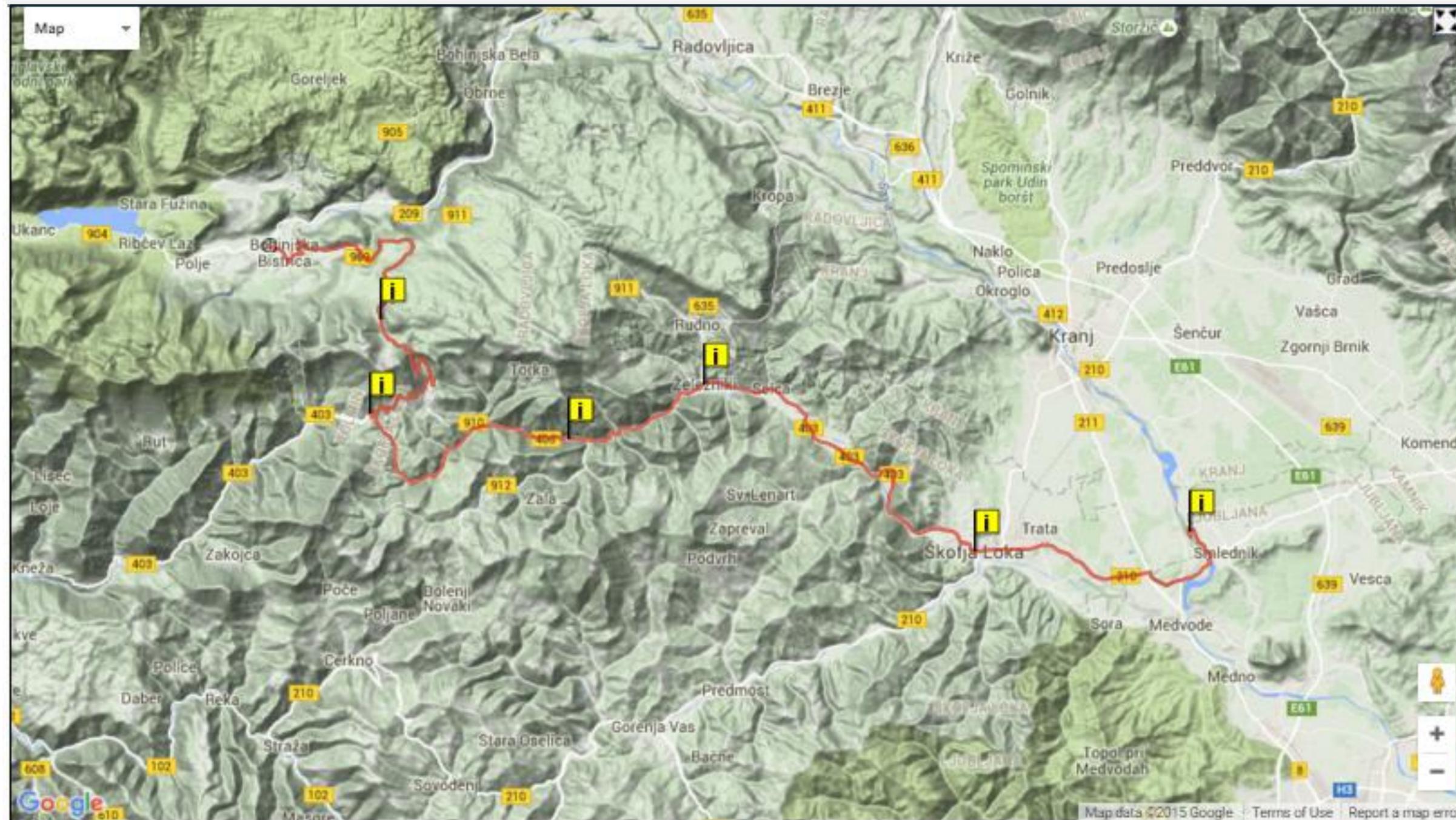


23-Sorica

21-Skofja Loka



22-Skofja Loka



Route D-Stage 5
Smlednik to Ljubljana

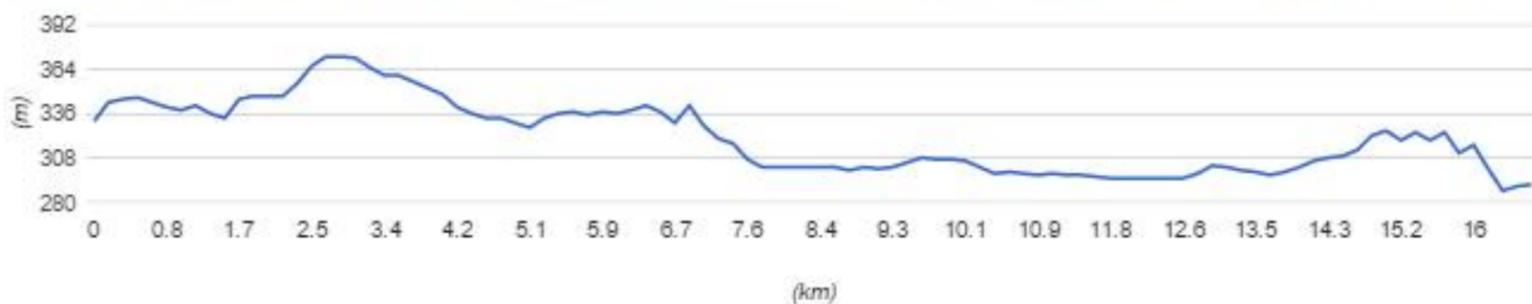
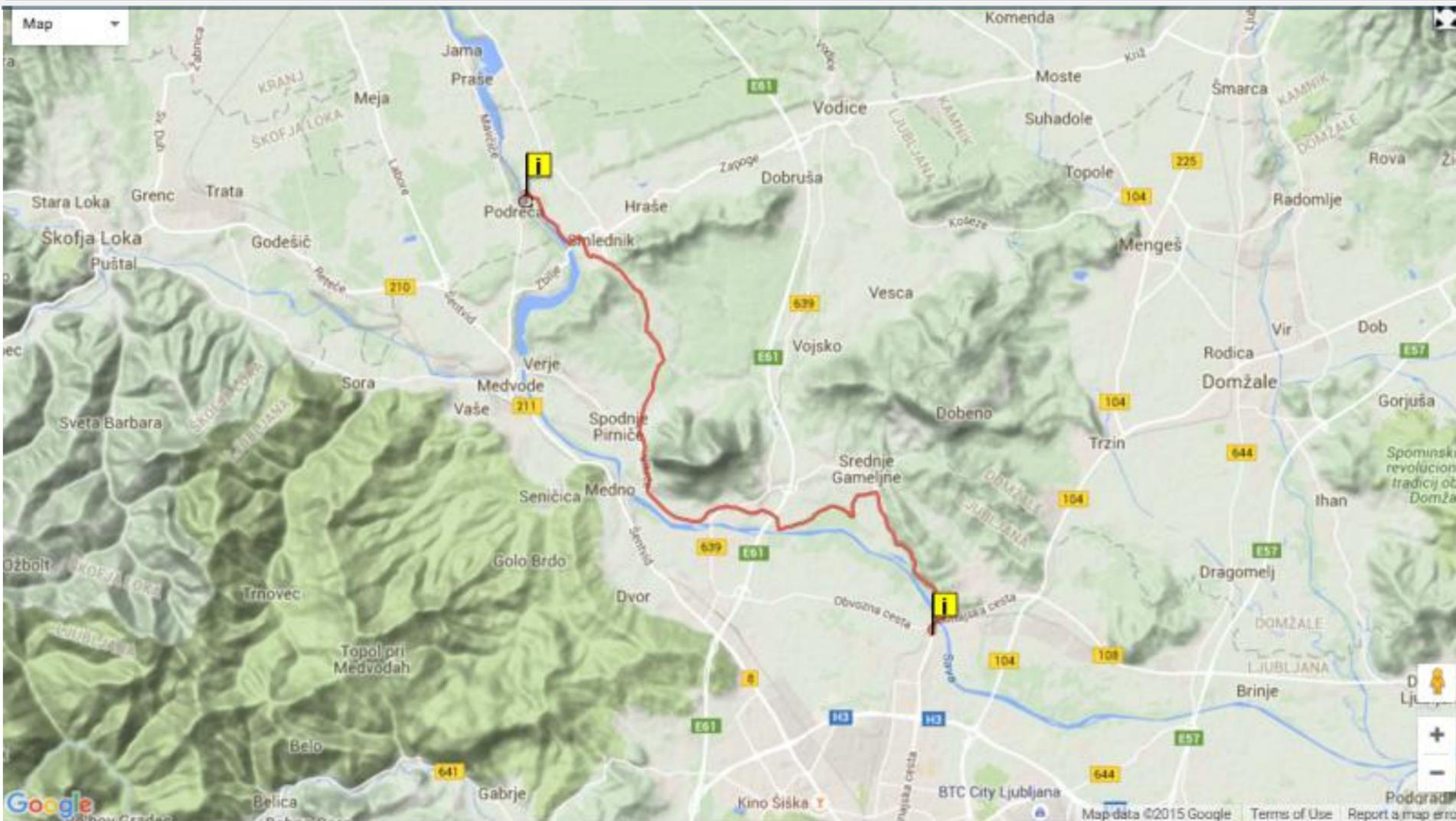
Distance: 17 km (11 mi)

Gain=235 m (771 ft)

Loss=281 m (922 ft)

Max=380 m (1247 ft)

Route D-Stage 5
Smlednik to Ljubljana



It is only 17 kilometers from Smlednik camping to Ljubljana Camping and Resort Hotel where we had stayed before. We found a direct route through hilly countryside that did not carry heavy traffic. It completes Route D, making a large loop through some of the finest scenery Slovenia has to offer.



Aside from completing loop D, we returned to Ljubljana for another very important reason.

I had ordered my new Azub trike from Czech Republic and it had arrived at Gregor's shop.

It is an understatement to say Azub Trike Company responded to my desire to buy their trike in a big hurry! They were behind in production due to a recent factory fire. But, I received a response the same day of inquiry from Milan Cvrtnik, head of sales. He managed to get me a new trike built for another customer who was willing to wait. Wow!

I am forever grateful.

Gregor and Bojan reinstalled our BionX equipment onto my new trike which has a 26" wheel. BionX gave me a great deal on upgrading to the bigger wheel. I would now have the same size motor as Mike's upright bike. I was eager to carry my share of the luggage and still get up those 14% grades.

My new Azub TRIcon trike (<http://www.azub.eu/azub-recumbent-trikes/>) is a workhorse. Designed for extended touring with limitless luggage, it features all the necessities of a quality trike. **And, yes...this trike offers a hinged folding mechanism as an option, yet it can still be separated without the hinge.**

I felt like Feng Shui was all lined up in my favor. So, off we went on Route E which would take us back into the mountains and across to Austria.



Route E-Complete

Ljubljana to Klopeiner See, Austria

Distance: 137 km (85 mi)

Gain=2693 m (8833 ft)

Loss=2331 m (7647 ft)

Max=2780 m (9120 ft)

Route E provides a scenic route straight through the center of Slovenia north into Austria. There are numerous highlights on this route including but not limited to:

Kamnik (http://www.slovenia.info/en/Places/Kamnik.htm?ctg_kraji=2887&lng=2) with its medieval historic center; the Kamnik Alps region just to the north of town make a delightful day ride where, cable car to Velika Planina and hiking can be pursued. Luce, a tiny town with a lot of character nestles in the heart of the Kamnik Alps.

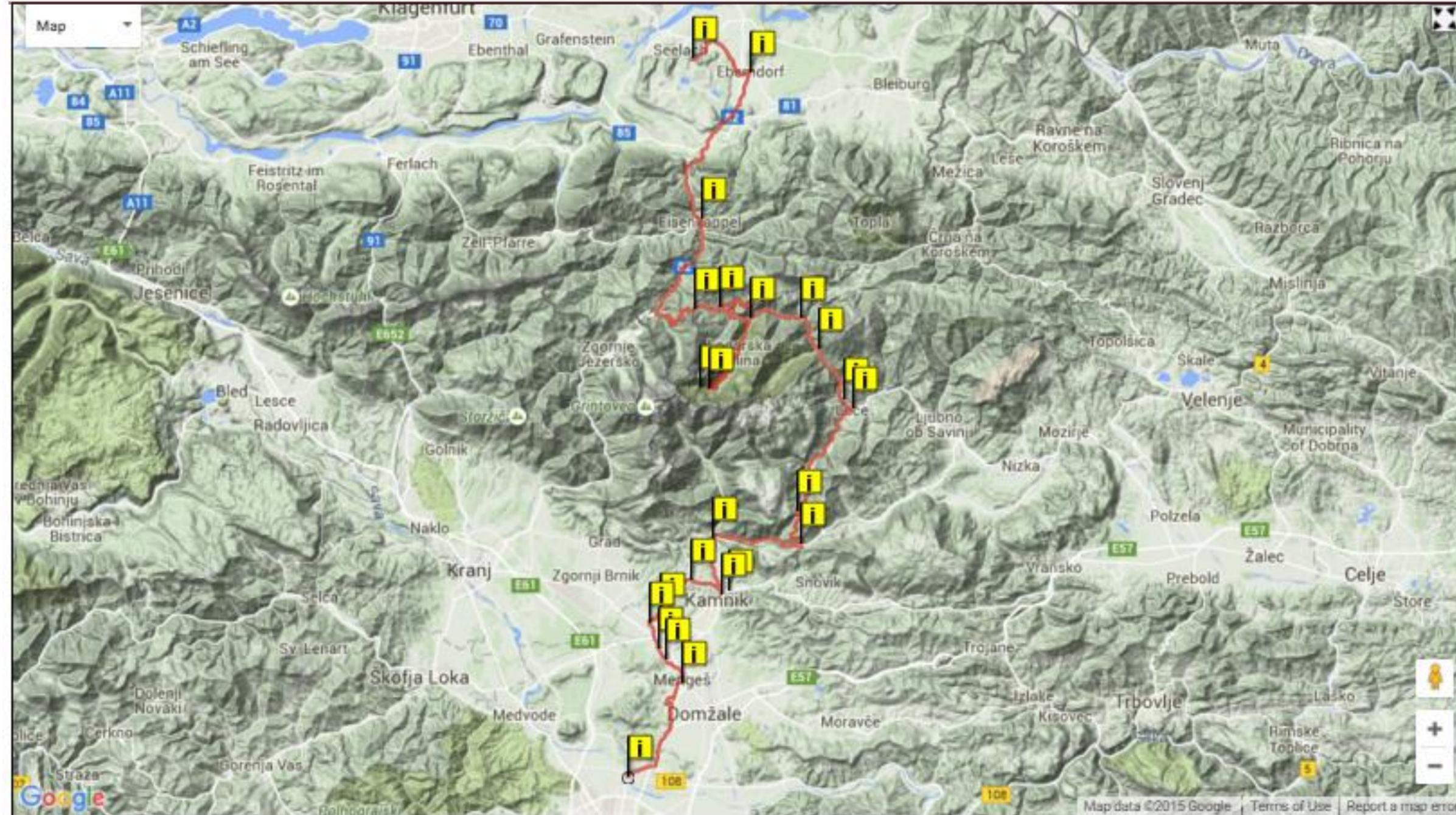
Locals are quick to point out a must side trip to Logarska Dolina, touted as the most beautiful valley in Slovenia. Our favorite spot was the Panorama Trail, a paved and gravel road that follows the spine of the Alps. There is so much to see and do on this route. Even though there are only 4 stages and a day ride, we spent 15 days completing the route. There was simply too much to see and do.

24-Kamnik Historic Center

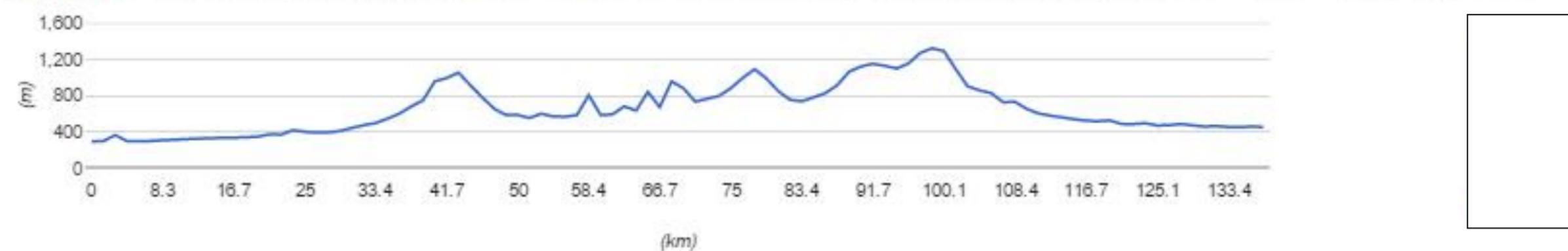


Route E-Complete

Ljubljana to Klopeiner See, Austria



25-Logarska Dolina from Panorama Rd



Route E-Stage 1

Ljubljana to Kamnik

Distance: 26 km (16 mi)

Gain=288 m (944 ft)

Loss=197 m (646 ft)

Max=432 m (1417 ft)

Most of this route avoids busy highways or has bicycle paths next to the highway. There are just a couple places where you have to negotiate busy intersections.

It takes a bit of detective work to find the various parts of the route as there are no signs other than for cars.

The route goes through Trzin, Loka, Menges, Topole, Suhadole, Moste,

Start by follow bike path next to Hwy 10 out of Ljubljana to Trzin.

Follow signage to Komenda but turn off to Gmajnica, Mlaka, Tunjiska Mlaka and straight into Kamnik.

At Gmajnica, you enter hilly country. There are some steep climbs but they are very short. Goes through small villages and there is no traffic.

At the time of this writing, from Mlaka to Tunjiska, the road was gravel. But it was hard packed gravel and appeared to be maintained.

If you want to avoid the hills and gravel, turn east at Moste and go through Kriz. We found this road to have heavy traffic and at the time, the surface was in terrible, patched, rough condition.

Another route that shows on this map, but we did not ride it, turns east before Trzin at Domzale towards Zaborst. The first part is on the main highway to Lukovica, but quickly turns off on a secondary road to Zaborst. When you cross the Kamniska River, look for a bike path on the west side of the bridge. This goes all the way north to Nozice, where you must rejoin the busy road the last few kilometers into Kamnik.

Auto camp Resnik which is just 300 meters from old town center offers a surprising variety of amenities, including picnic tables under cover. Very inexpensive because it is only 2 star, but it is a very nice place to use for a base.

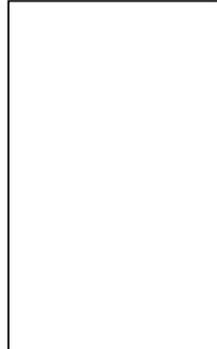
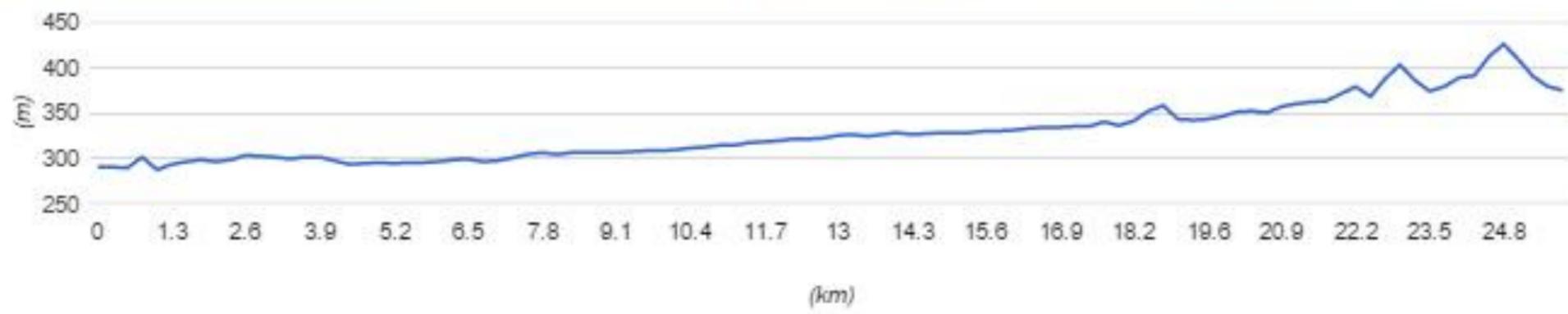
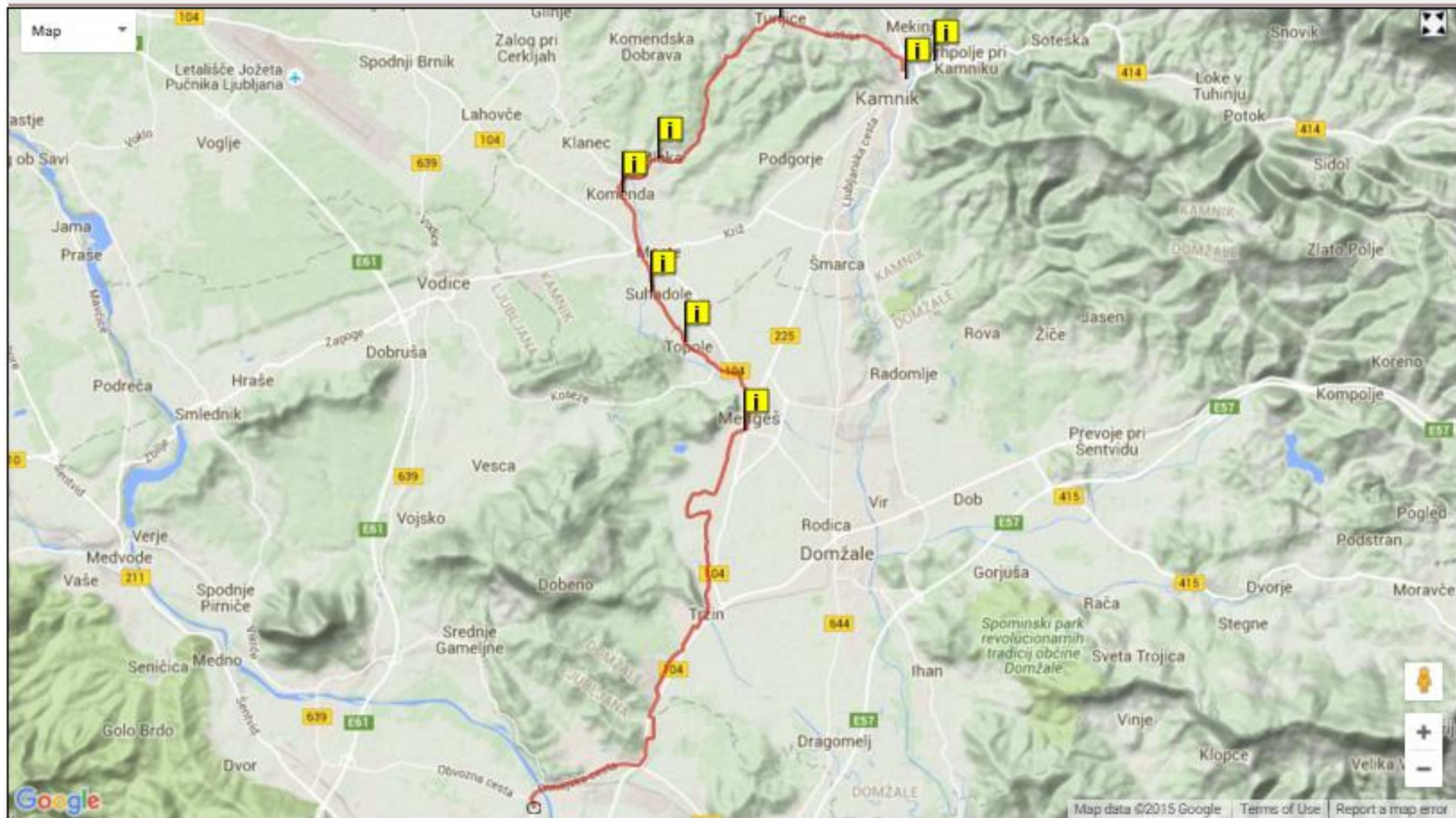




26-Kamnik



Route E-Stage 1
Ljubljana to Kamnik





Route E-Day ride
Kamnik-Kamniska Bistrica

Distance: 14 km (9 mi) One Way
Gain=224 m (735 ft)
Loss=17 m (55 ft)
Max=600 m (1969 ft)

This is a delightful ride from Kamnik to the north end of Kamniska Bistrica Valley. The smooth, paved two lane road follows Kamnik Bistrica stream. The paved road ends at an Alpine hut/restaurant that is very popular. Many hiking trails up into the Kamnik Savinja Alps start from here. Across the road is a lovely small lake with the stream flowing out.

About midway between Kamnik and the road end is the cable car station to Velika Planina, the most popular destination area for high elevation hiking trails. It is also famous for the historic shepherd huts that dot the slopes of the ski area, and the cheese the people made in the olden days. A very

busy restaurant sits at the high point on the mountain, but the cable car does not go to the top.



27-Kamniska Bistrica



You must hike steeply up the ski runs at least 35 minutes to get to the restaurant at the top. A ski maintenance road to the top is not as steep as the slopes, but it is much longer and very rocky. No views from cable car landing. So, be prepared for a challenging hike to the restaurant after you take the cable car up.

We, by happenstance, went on Sunday when the restaurant has wonderful live traditional music.





Route E-Day Ride

Kamnik to Kamniska Bistrica



Route E-Stage 2

Kamnik to Luce



Took a route over the mountains instead of following the main road which would have more traffic. Climb from Kamnik, at first is gently. There are several sets of switchbacks, each set a bit longer and steeper than the previous set.

Look for sign to Kalise and make a sharp left turn up a very steep one kilometer hill. After that, it climbs easily to the highest point at Volovljek where there is a charming cafe for a well deserved stop.

From there, it is all downhill to Luce, starting with a long 14% descent.

Wonderful winding road with no traffic. Through lovely forest with occasional views of peaks and pastureland.

Luce is tiny and offers ambiance with cafes, market, tourist info and rooms. Completely surrounded by mountains, we were grateful the road followed the river's easy gradient.

The campground is small and pleasant. It is 500 meters beyond the town. Kamp Smica.



Distance: 32 km (20 mi)

Gain=656 m (2152 ft)

Loss=505 m (1657 ft)

Max= 929 m (3048 ft)

Route E-Stage 2

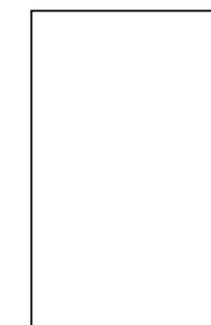
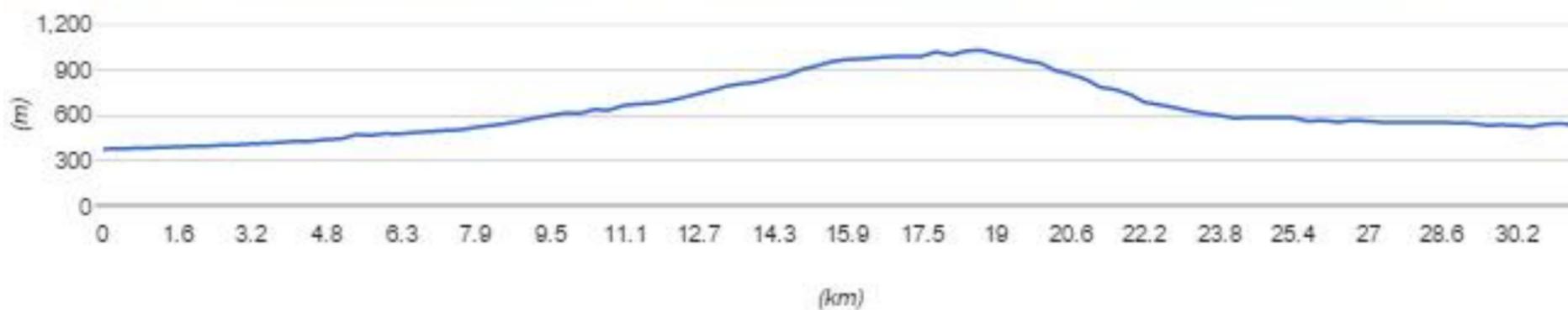
Kamnik to Luce



28-Luce



An alternate route to Luce stays in the main valley and follows Hwy 225. It is a longer route but the climbing is less steep.



Route E-Stage 3
Luce to Logarska Dolina

Very short, easy ride following the river through the mountains. The gain is considerable, but the grade is constant with no sudden steepness.

The mountains part and present the Logarska Dolina's gorgeous valley. The best views are from this junction. Further up valley, the road diverges left and right. We took the left and discovered more magnificent views and very nice lodging facilities.

There is no camping in the valley. We reserved a bunk room in Dom Planincev at upper end of the valley. This is the budget place with limited views of the mountains. Has restaurant and picnic tables so we decided to cook our own dinner. No groceries in valley. Last shopping is in Solcava.



Distance: 20 km (12 mi)

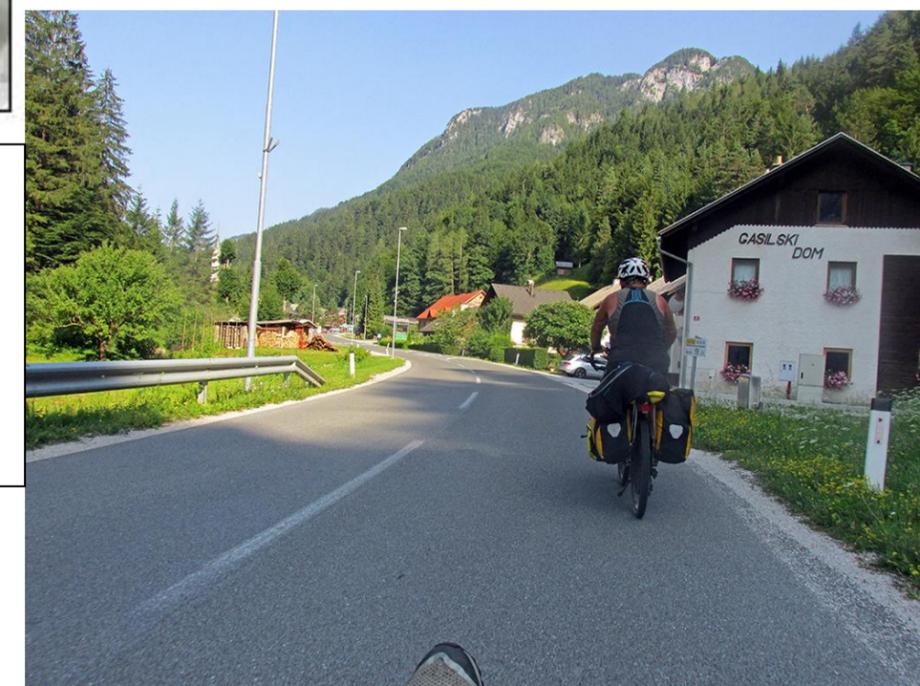
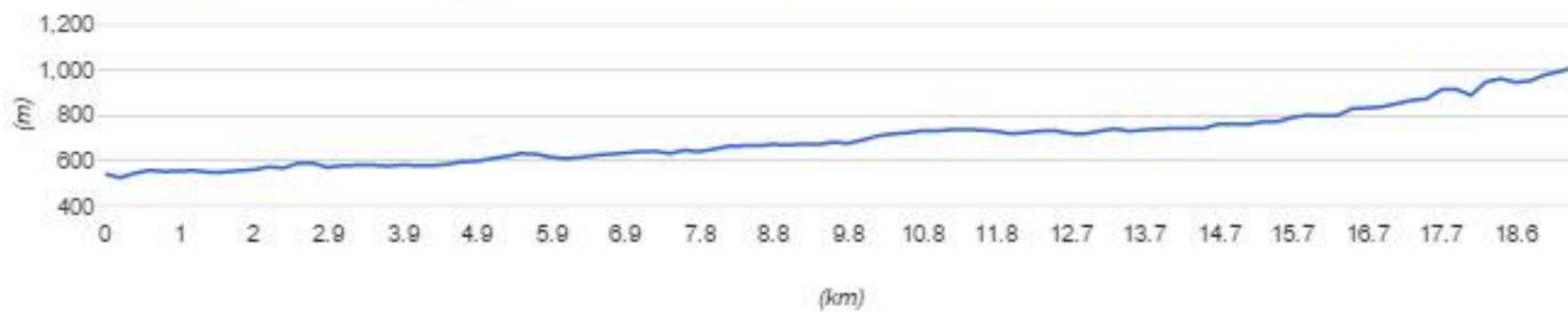
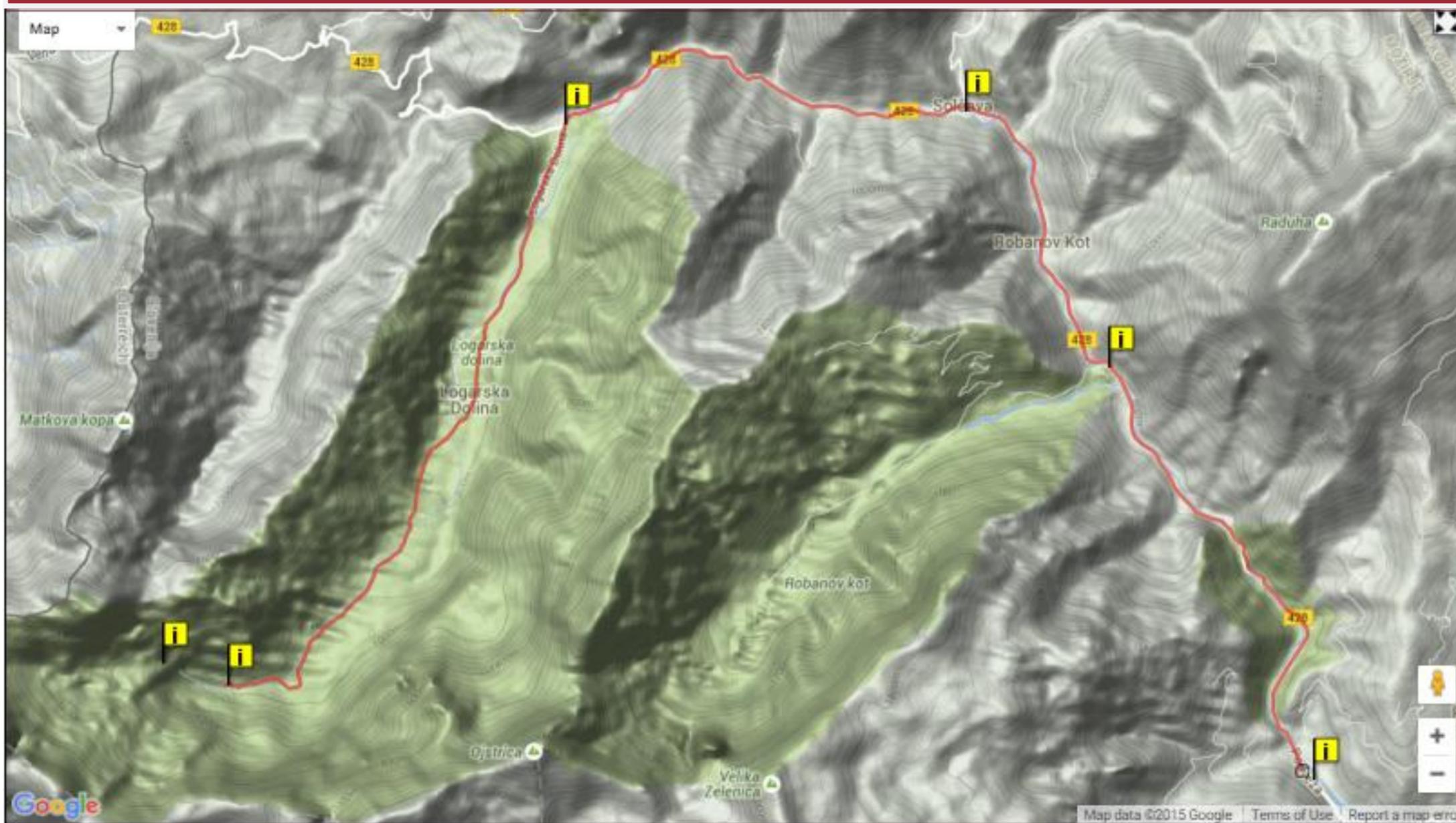
Gain= 833 m (2732 ft)

Loss= 350 m (1148 ft)

Max=1024 m (3360 ft)

Route E-Stage 3

Luce to Logarska Dolina



Route E-Stage 4

Logarska Dolina to Klopeiner See Austria

Via Bad Eisenkappel and Eberndorf

Distance: 59 km (37 mi)

Gain=916 m (3005 ft)

Loss=1279 m (4196 ft)

Max=1300 m (4265 ft)

This route crosses the mountains from Slovenia to Austria. It is, believe it or not, the easier way to meet the Drava River Trail unless you cycle towards Dravograd and pick up the river there. It is a long day, but once into Austria, the route plunges downhill and then stays fairly flat to Klopeiner See. The route also includes a side trip out Panorama Road which we highly recommend.

From Logarska Dolina, climb uphill for about 7 kilometers to a junction. Turn right on Panorama Road to Podolseva for the

side trip. The road is paved for about 5 kilometers and offers superb views of the mountains surrounding Logarska Dolina. There are two very nice farm stays in this section. Perhaps the most interesting is within 4 kilometers at Klemensek Farm. They offer food and lodging and the possibility of camping. Zibovt is within .5 kilometer. They also offer food and lodging.

After 5 kilometers, Panorama road alternates between gravel and paving. The gravel is fine and well packed for the most part, but we did not go all the way through as we had wanted. About 15 kilometers to Podolseva, the road drops steeply down to Solcava and the top 4 kilometers are gravel. If going further towards Spodnje Sleme, there is one very steep descent on gravel. Our tires cannot do the hills well on gravel so we decided not to go through.

Back at the junction, the highway continues to climb to Pavlicevo and the Austrian border. Still not done climbing it gets

steeper for at least 3 more kilometers. Then the road drops insanely steeply all the way to Bad Eisenkappel. We would not want to do this route in reverse. North of Bad Eisenkappel, there are several lakes with camping. We went to Klopeiner See which was jammed packed, like all the other lakes are during July. We are out of the mountains now and in the valley of the Drava River.



29-Panorama Road



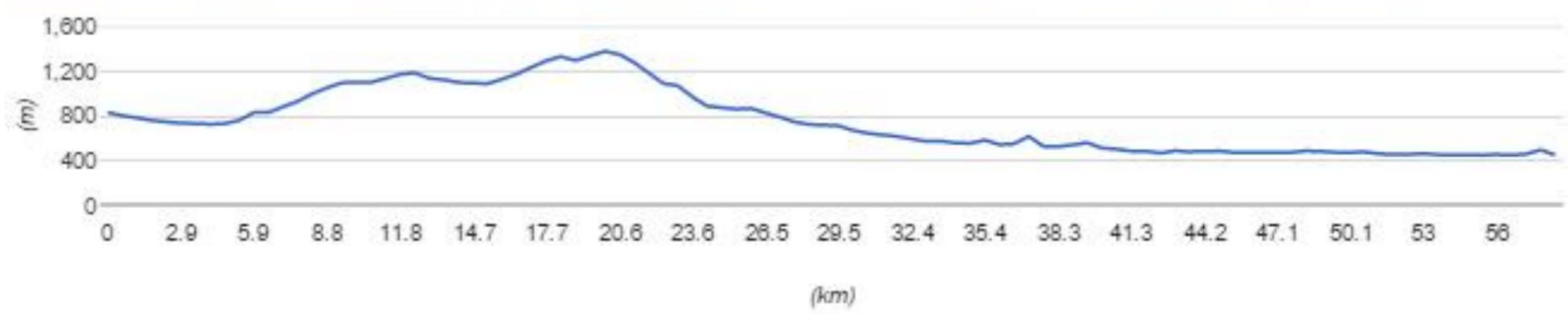
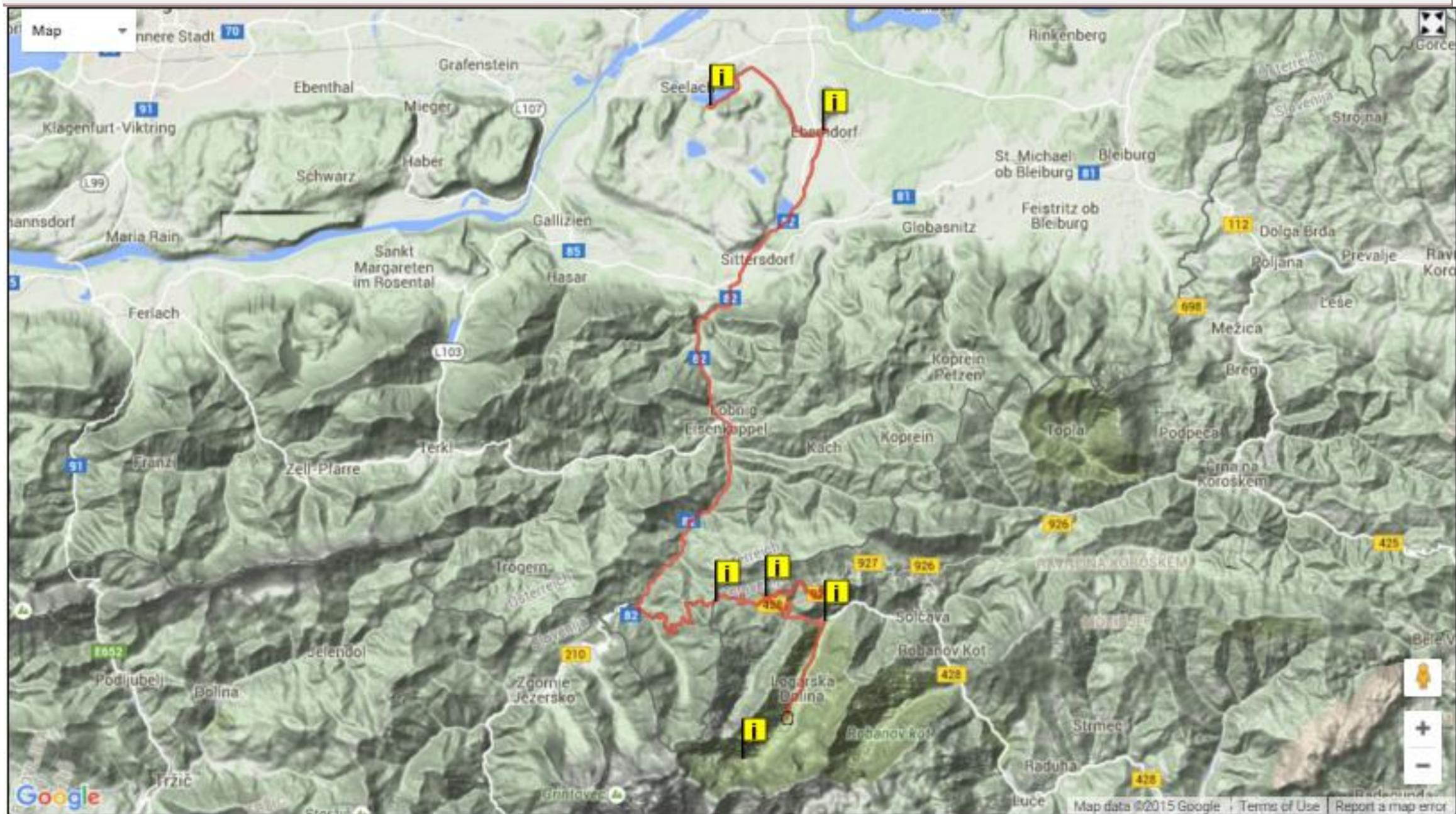


30-Descending in Austria



Route E-Stage 4

Logarska Dolina to Klopeiner See, Austria



Route F-Complete

Ljubljana to Krk Island, Croatia

Distance: 159 km (99 mi)

Gain=2849 m (9347 ft)

Loss=3076 m (10,092 ft)

Max=900 m (2952 ft)

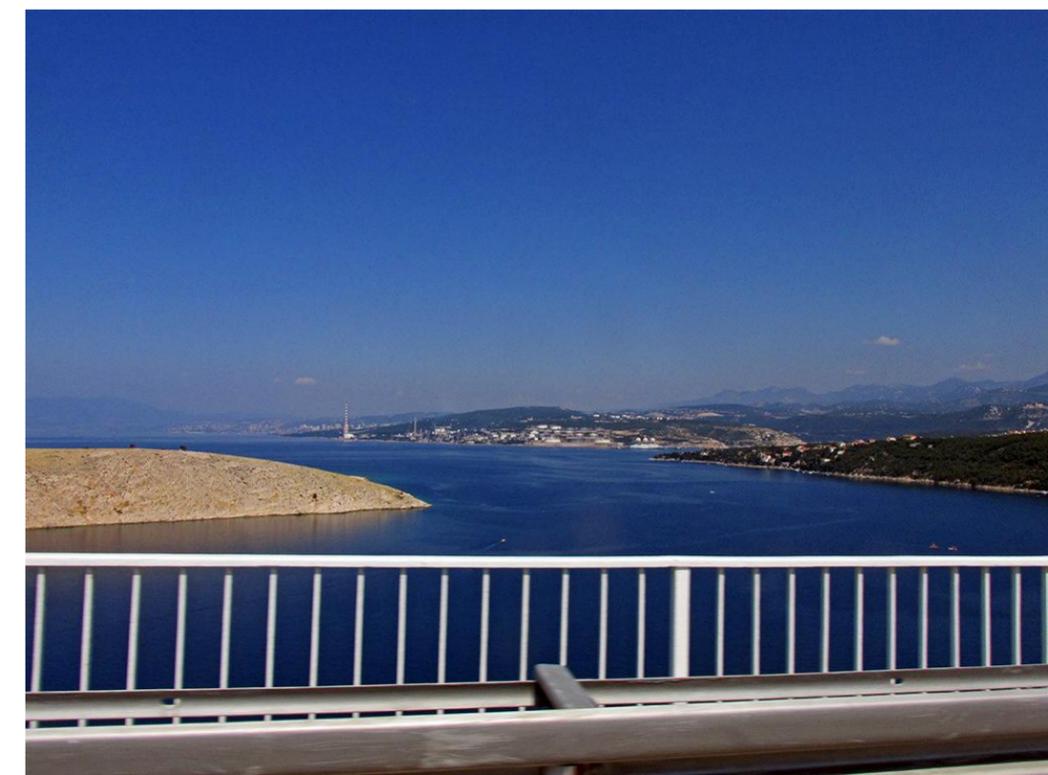
Many cyclists have an interest in riding from Slovenia to Croatia, to cycle the islands or south to Dubrovnik. Route B is the easiest way to the coast, with access to the Istrian Peninsula, but that is not the shortest route that gets cyclists to the Croatian Islands or to the coastline that goes all the way to Dubrovnik. There is no easy route to get from Slovenia to this Croatian coast. All routes must go through mountains.

Route F follows Route A as far as Prezid Croatia before changing direction and aiming for the coastal islands. It is a mountainous route. Take a close look at the figures in the right hand box. But, it is spectacular cycling! The descents on curving mountain roads through undeveloped forests on good roads with little traffic is simply thrilling.

Another benefit of this route is that it avoids going into Rijeka, Croatia, a big city with few options for bicycle movement. Instead, the route brings cyclists to the coast just south of the Krk Island bridge.

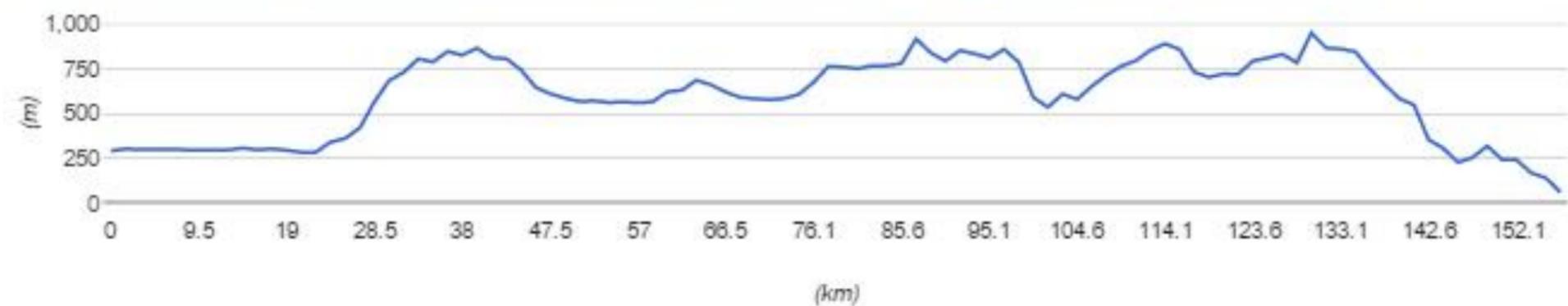
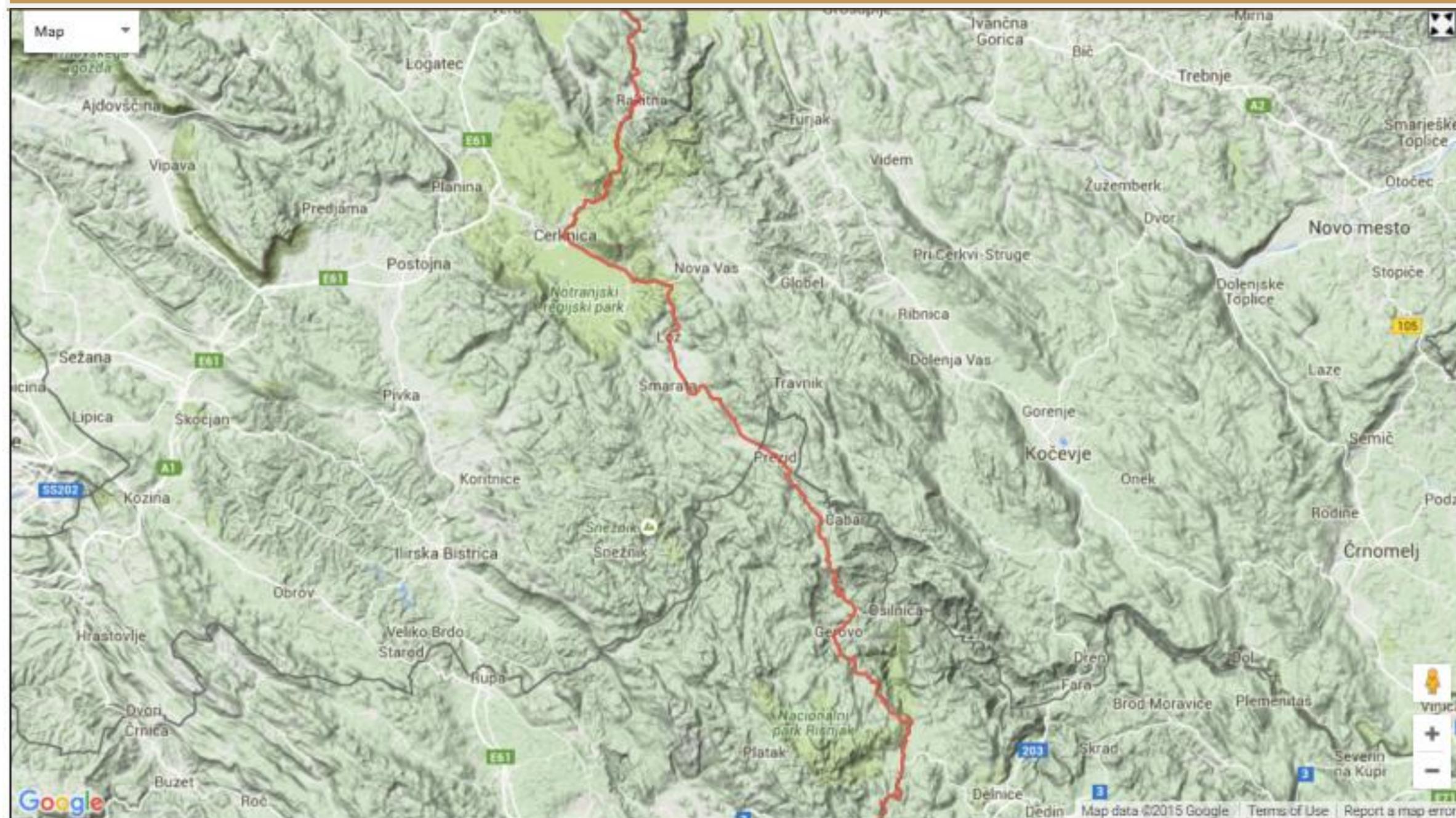
Traffic is an issue once you reach Hwy E65 and the Krk Island Bridge. In fact, traffic on Krk Island is speeding past cyclists on a two lane road. The good news is, however, that when we cycled Krk Island, construction of more bike paths was under way. Regardless, Krk Island makes the easiest and best starting point for cyclists who want to tour the Croatian Islands. We discovered the island route south to Dubrovnik was incredibly scenic and traffic free compared to coastal highway E65.

To get started, use Route A-stages 1 and 2 to Prezid Croatia. Stages 3 and 4 are on the following pages.



Route F-Complete

Ljubljana to Krk Island Croatia



Route F-Stage 3

Prezid to Crni Lug

Distance: 37 km (23 mi)

Gain=1211 m (3973 ft)

Loss=1258 m (4127 ft)

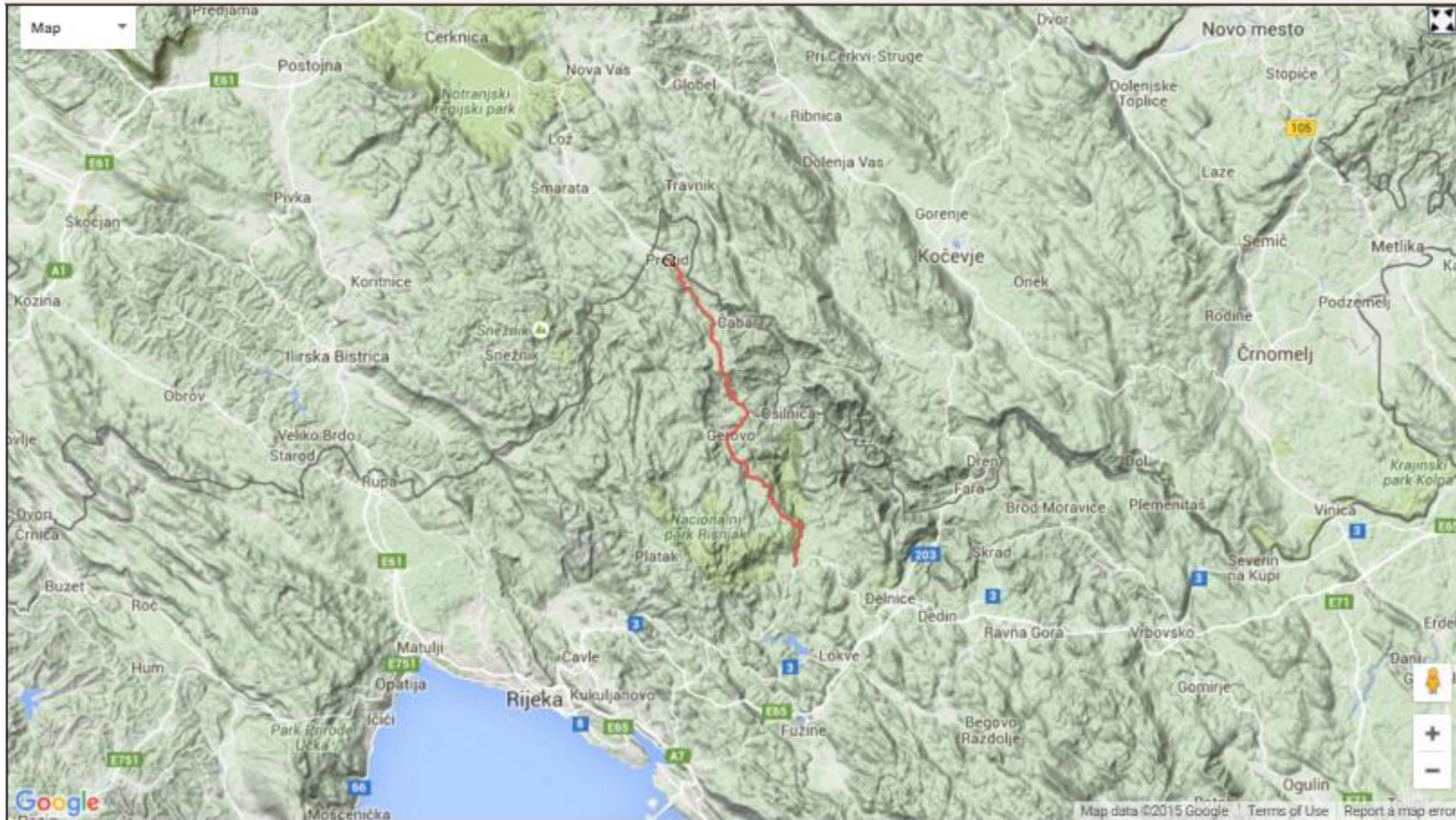
Max=921 m (3021 ft)

From Prezid, stay on Hwy 32 all the way to Crni Lug. This is the up and down stage with several big climbs and descents. There are scattered towns in this section: Kozji Vrh, Parg, Makov Hrib, but they do not have groceries. The long downhill in the middle of the route is our favorite. It starts soon after leaving Trsce and seriously curves most of the way to Mali Lug. The climbing begins again by Gerovo which sits in a beautiful valley. This is the longest climb. There are no towns after Gerovo until Crni Lug which has all amenities.

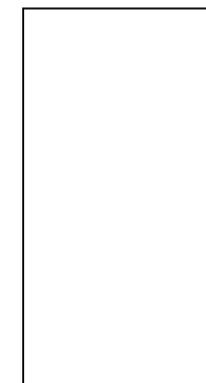
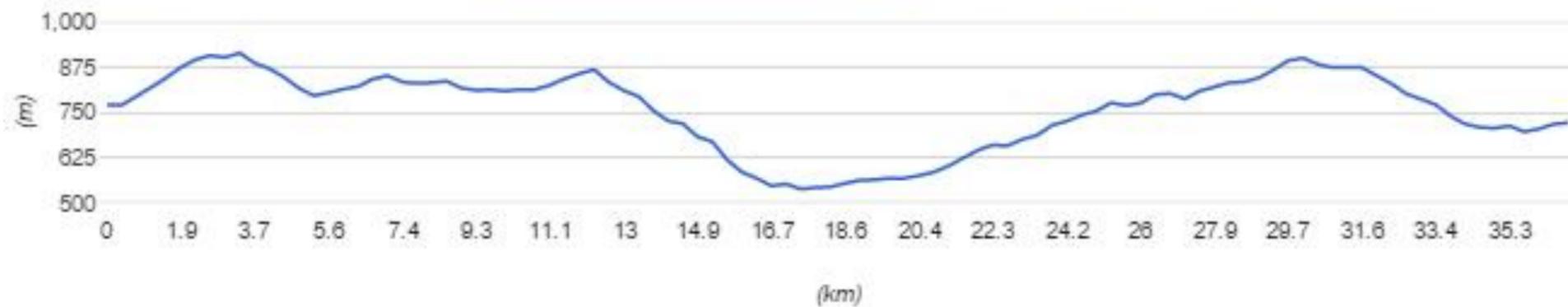


Route F-Stage 3

Prezid Croatia to Crni Lug Croatia



31-Gerovo



Route F-Stage 4

Crni Lug to Krk Island

Distance: 52 km (32 mi)

Gain=1147 m (3763 ft)

Loss=1865 m (6119 ft)

Max=933 m (3061 ft)

This is the big downhill day. A total of 1865 meters (6119 ft). Wow! But you will earn it. You still have to climb a total of 1147 meters (3763 ft) first. Croatia, is actually more challenging than Slovenia!

We did say, I remember saying it, there is no easy way to the coast unless you make some really long detours.

We must admit. We never would have considered cycling this route before we added our BionX electric assist motors. The motors gave us the extra boost to actually enjoy these big climbs. Yes, we have done equal in the past, without electric assist. But as we said, we are now in our 70's and such challenges are too much for us. We would have suggested this route for younger lungs and legs, but with our electric assist, we really had a ball! This is a fun route!

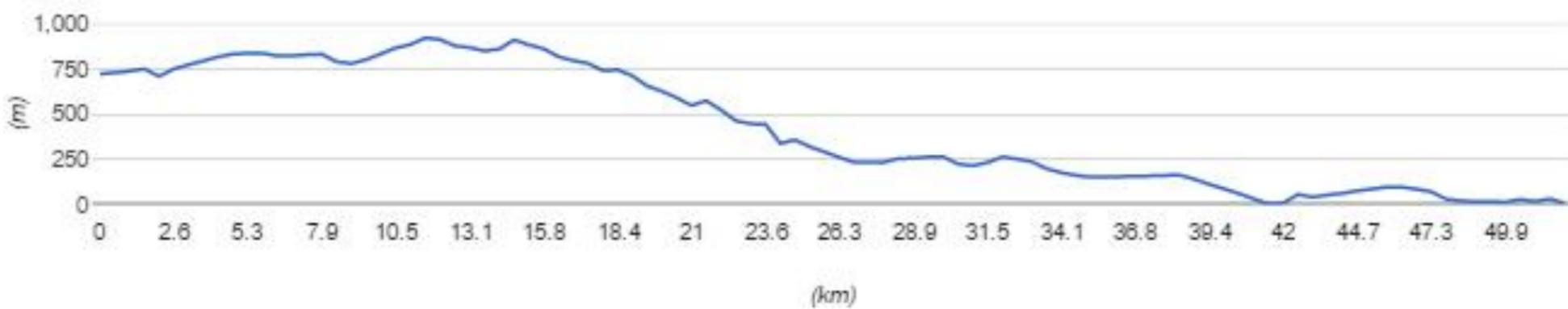
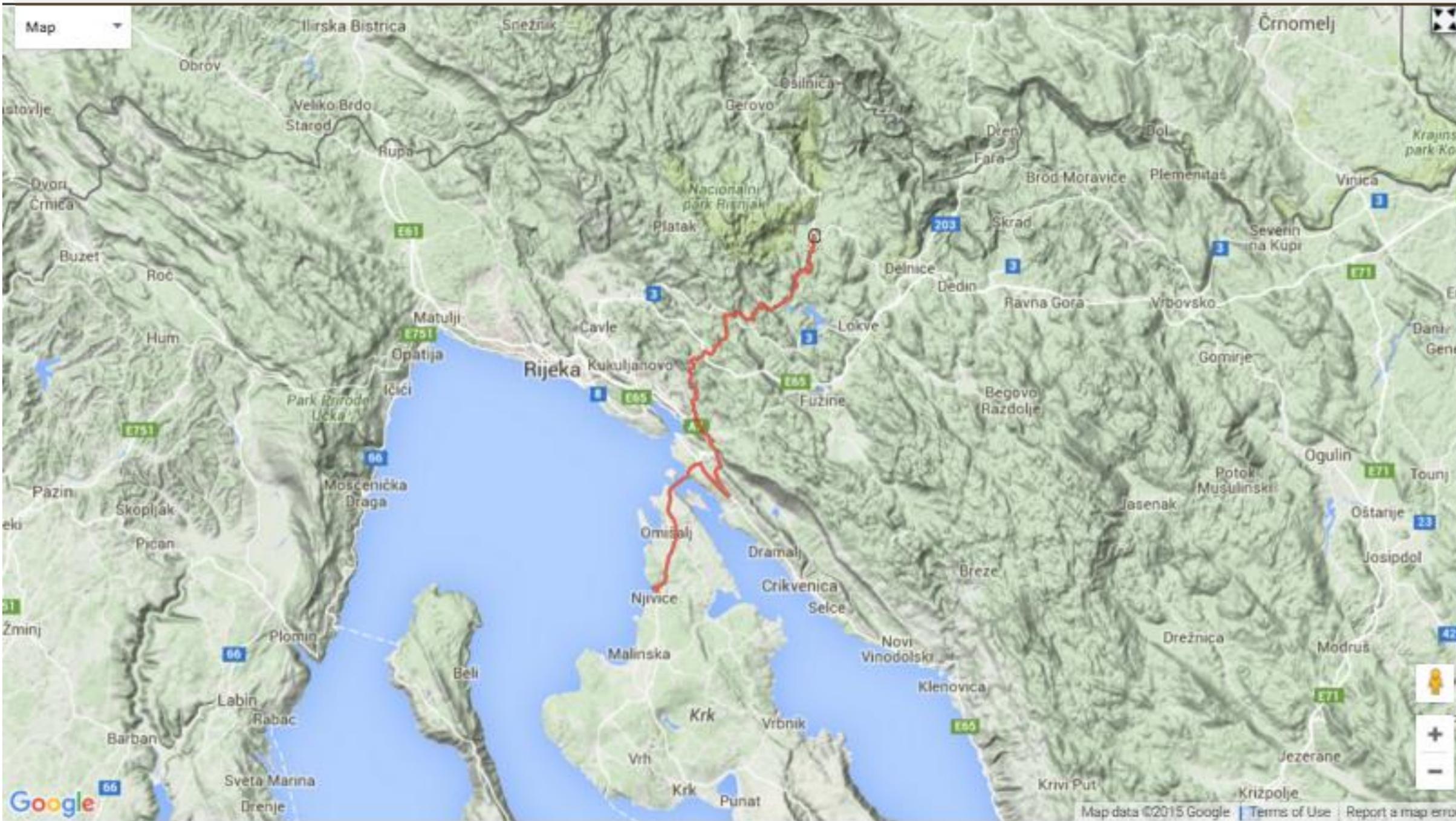
You cannot believe how long that 6119 foot downhill run feels. Of course, I was especially comfortable riding my new Azub trike. Like being at the wheel of a Jaguar.

Views of the coast start appearing while you are still quite high. There is no traffic until you join the actual coast highway E65. Then, it's a short backtrack to the Krk Island Bridge. We rode on to lovely Nivice Beach for the night.



Route F-Stage 4

Crni Lug Croatia to Krk Island Croatia



About the Authors

Anne and Mike Poe have been adventuring together since their marriage in 1970. From whitewater kayaking to glacier skiing, to bicycling for six months at a time, their adventures began to expand more and more. **In the 1980's** Anne started writing and photographing all their trips so the memories would always stay fresh. She published numerous articles in various outdoor magazines.

In 1984, they bicycled from Costa Rica to Peru. In successive years, they bicycled from Alaska to Idaho; six months through New Zealand; six months around Australia; and finally, in 1997, a six month odyssey from Bali, Indonesia to Hong Kong, China. Anne wrote her first book, *On Our Own: A Bicycling Adventure in Southeast Asia*, about that amazing journey.

From 1984 to 1990, they instructed downhill skiing in Vail, Colorado. During the summer months, they instructed Outward Bound Courses in the Boundary Waters Wilderness area of northern Minnesota.

By 1990, backpacking Canada's wilderness trails became the new focus. For six summers, they returned to explore new areas, photograph, and write.

In 2004, they started hiking Colorado's more than 4,000 miles of trails. When they went to Crested Butte, they knew they had found a hiker's paradise. For four summers, they researched, hiked, photographed and mapped this marvelous area, and produced their first guidebook: *Crested Butte Colorado: 60 Scenic Day Hikes*. When that sold out the first summer, before just printing another edition, they made revisions suggested by their followers and came out with the second edition: *Crested Butte Colorado: 65 Scenic Day Hikes*.

Summer 2010, they hiked trails in Silverton & Ouray, Colorado with the intention of producing another book. They knew the area's potential from having hiked many of the area trails over the years. In spring of 2011, they introduced *Southwest Colorado: High Country Day Hikes Ouray, Silverton & Lake City*.

All those years in Colorado, they spent the off seasons of April, May, and October in Moab, Utah hiking trails for another publication: *Utah National Parks, Arches and Canyonlands Day Hikes*. **Hikers from all over continue to be enthusiastic about this new style of hiking guides that the Poes are producing.**

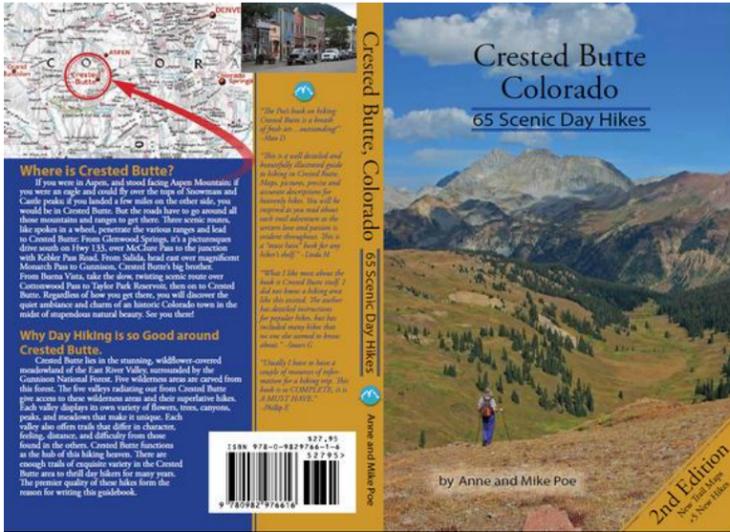
Having been successful with their hiking guides, the Poes are now turning their talents back to their first love: bicycle touring. Since their very first publication about touring was written as an adventure novel, they are now producing guides for cycle touring with maps, profiles and important data specific to their favorite routes. Hence, this book on their cycling adventures in Slovenia.

Anne is an Alpha. Alpha-1 is a lung emphysema that is inherited. It is progressive and life-long. She had lost 30% of her lung capacity before the disorder was discovered and abated through augmentation therapy. There are only 10,000 Americans currently diagnosed correctly, with a potential 100,000 possible cases. An estimated 20 million Americans are carriers of the abnormal genes. At risk groups include chronic COPD, irreversible asthma, and emphysema sufferers. Her goal is to bring awareness of the disorder to a public place. For more information, go to www.alpha-1foundation.org.



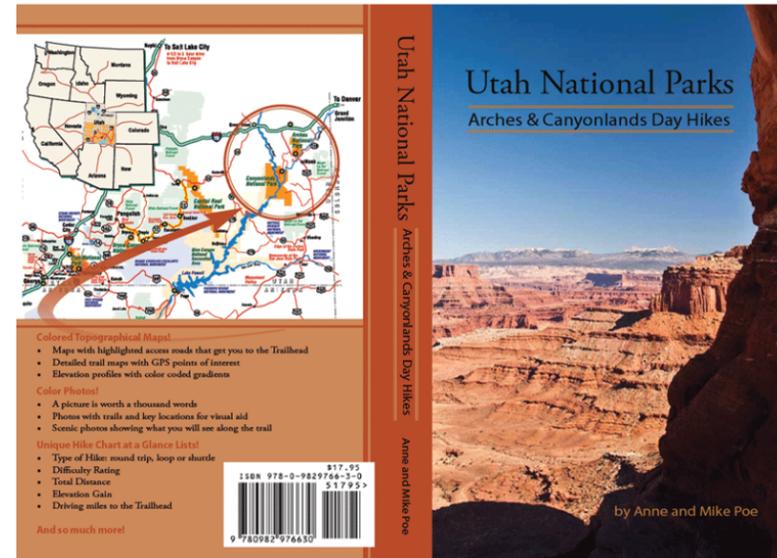
32-Anne & Mike in St Brevin, France

Book Store



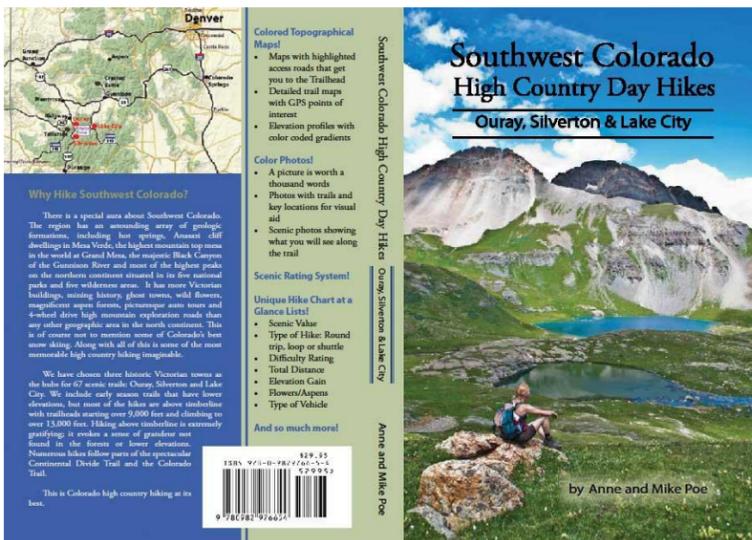
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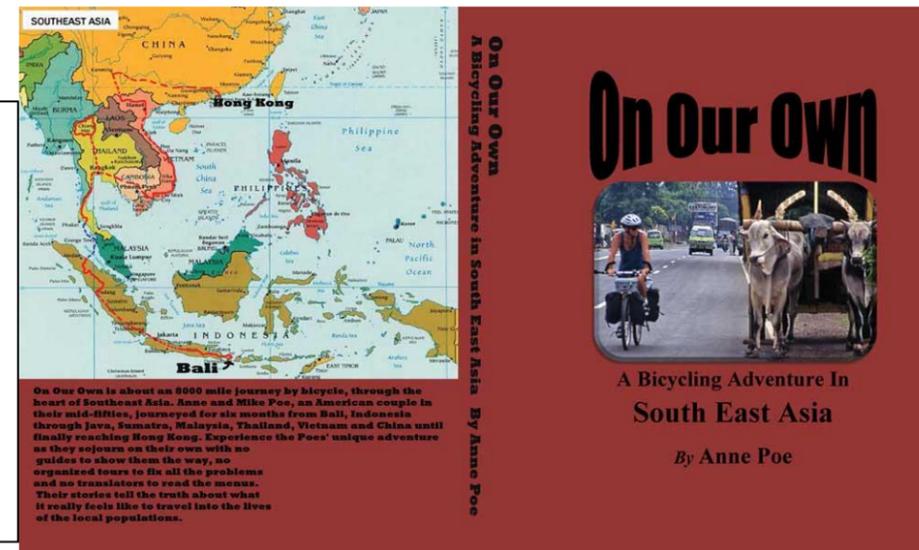
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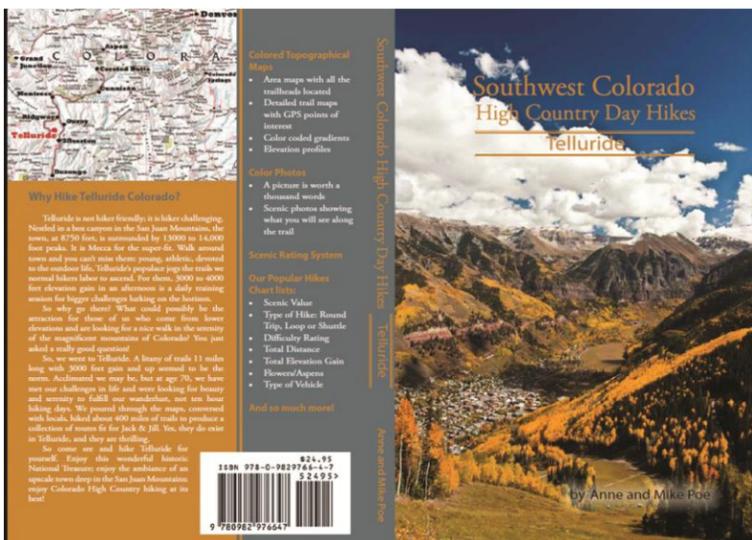
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