

PHOTOGRAPHIC EXPEDITION

Bears in the Western Balkans

CROATIA AND SLOVENIA

WILD SPAIN TRAVEL

August 9th - 13th, 2027

info@wildspaintravel.com +34 684 63 98 60

An immersive **wildlife photography experience in the Western Balkans,** combining brown bear hide sessions at several locations across Slovenia and Croatia.

The high density of bears in this region, covered in extensive beech and conifer forests, makes it one of Europe's finest destinations for watching and photographing the species.

Throughout the trip, we will use carefully selected hides that offer excellent viewing opportunities and favourable lighting conditions for photography. Each hide provides a window into a different part of the forest regularly frequented by brown bears. Sometimes one or two individuals may appear; on other occasions, as many as ten different bears may visit! This creates exciting interactions and memorable moments for both observation and photography.

The itinerary combines **four brown bear photography sessions** with one bird photography session at a drinking pool, as well as outings to explore the surrounding landscapes, offering a well-rounded experience for wildlife photographers.



Bears in the Western Balkans

WILD SPAIN TRAVEL

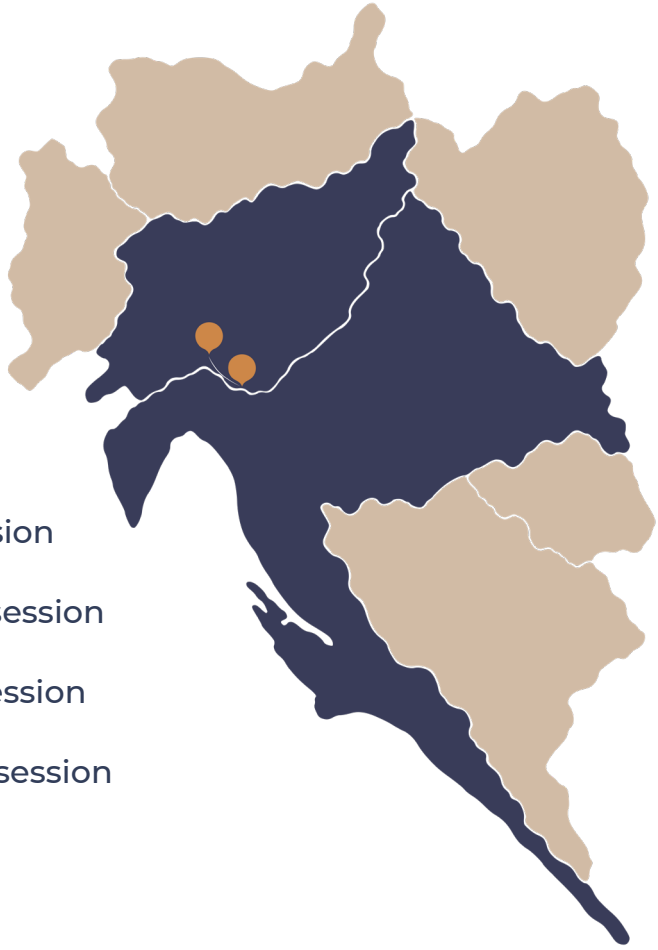
2027

Croatia and southern Slovenia

August 9th-13th, 2027
5 days / 4 nigths

Small group
Maximum 6 people

Tour Leader
Luis Frechilla

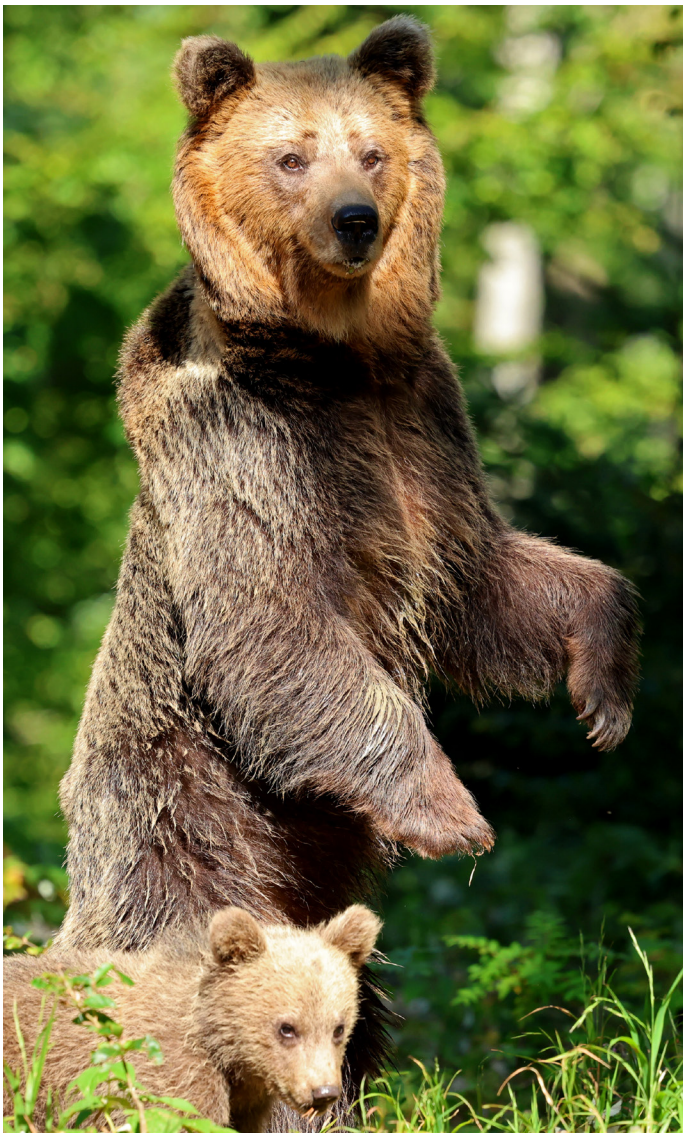


- Croatia. First brown bear photography session
- Croatia. Second brown bear photography session
- Slovenia. Third brown bear photography session
- Slovenia. Fourth brown bear photography session and bird photography
- Lakes and karst caves



MORE INFORMATION AND BOOKINGS info@wildspaintravel.com +34 684 63 98 60









From June onwards, female bears that gave birth during the winter emerge from their dens with their cubs. These families become increasingly active as the season progresses, with sightings around the hides peaking in August. On this trip, we therefore hope to watch cubs playing, chasing one another, exploring their surroundings and engaging in little sibling squabbles, always under their mother's watchful, anxious gaze. **Her presence adds another dimension to the experience,** offering us the rare privilege of observing these intimate moments without disturbing the bears—scenes that are seldom witnessed in the wild.

Choose this option if you want to photograph mothers with cubs, endearing moments of spontaneous play, family interactions and young bears of different ages. It is also ideal if you would like to gain a broader understanding of this part of the Balkans and discover how local communities coexist with large predators while pursuing sustainable livelihoods linked to conservation.



ITINERARY

DAY 1 – 9TH AUGUST · FIRST BROWN BEAR ENCOUNTER IN CROATIA

Taking a suitable flight, we will arrive in Croatia before midday, allowing enough time to settle into our accommodation and prepare our equipment for our first photography session.

At the time agreed with our guide, we will set off by 4x4 for one of the hides deep in the surrounding forests. The choice of hide will depend on bear sightings and activity over the preceding days. **The proximity of the bears and the possibility of other wildlife appearing**—including badgers, foxes, martens, roe deer and red deer—will keep us captivated until nightfall.

During this stage of the trip, photographers wishing to extend their session into the night may stay overnight in a hide, subject to advance arrangements. Some hides are equipped with bunk beds and LED lighting that illuminates the surrounding area, making night photography possible.

DAY 2 – 10TH AUGUST · INTRODUCTION TO RISNJAK NATIONAL PARK AND SECOND BROWN BEAR PHOTOGRAPHY SESSION

We will make the most of the free morning before our second brown bear photography session—all bear hide sessions take place in the afternoon—to explore some of the beautiful scenery of **Risnjak National Park.** This protected area encompasses some of Croatia's most mountainous terrain, with **rolling hills, karst ridges and dense forests that are home to bears,** wolves and Eurasian lynx. Chamois inhabit the higher, rocky areas, and the national park offers guided walks to observe them in summer. We, however, will focus on the rivers and springs at lower elevations, as well as villages with charming traditional architecture.

At the time agreed with our guide, midway through the afternoon, we will board the 4x4 once again for a bumpy journey along steep, uneven forest tracks to our hide in another secluded corner of the forest. Hours of anticipation will follow, during which we hope to **enjoy remarkable encounters with different brown bears.** We will also keep an eye out for other species that may appear unexpectedly, revealing just how full of life these forests are.

As the last light fades, we will leave the hides and return to the hotel, recalling the scenes we have witnessed and eager to download our photographs and share the results with our travelling companions.

DAY 3 TH – 11 AUGUST · BROWN BEARS IN SLOVENIA

After breakfast, we will set off for Slovenia along a scenic road through **the extensive forests of the Balkans.** Although the journey takes only around 30 minutes, we will make several stops along the way to enjoy the scenery and photograph the forests, villages and mountains that characterise this region.

We will leave for **our first brown bear hide** in Slovenia in the early afternoon, allowing time to reach the hide, set up our equipment and be ready before the bears become most active. Unlike the previous hides, this one requires a short walk from the vehicle. During the approach, it is essential to follow the guide's instructions, which include staying together as a group and remaining silent at all times.

The hides are set in carefully selected locations, allowing us to observe and photograph bears without disturbing their natural behaviour, typically at distances of 40–80 metres, though occasionally they may come remarkably close.

The session will continue into the last hours of daylight, when conditions can be particularly rewarding for photography. It will end when the guide decides it is time to leave the hide quietly and in an orderly manner, staying together as a group throughout.



DAY 4 – 12TH AUGUST · BIRD AND BROWN BEAR PHOTOGRAPHY IN SLOVENIA

Our second morning in Slovenia will be dedicated to **photography woodland and farmland birds from spacious, comfortable hides overlooking drinking pools.** These well-designed setups offer opportunities for beautiful portraits and behavioural images of a wide range of species. These include familiar birds such as Eurasian jay, common blackbird, song thrush, common chaffinch, European robin and Eurasian nuthatch, with opportunities to photograph red crossbill, hawfinch and **grey-headed woodpecker,** as well as mammals such as **red squirrel.**

These pools provide excellent opportunities to explore different photographic techniques and subjects, including close-ups, behaviour, reflections, birds interacting with water and flight photography.

After the session, we will return to our accommodation for lunch and some rest before our second brown bear photography session in Slovenia. We will follow the same procedure as on the previous day, but at a different location, offering fresh photographic opportunities in terms of setting, light and the bears themselves. We will have the chance to appreciate how each individual differs in coat colour, facial expression and gaze.

DAY 5 – 13TH AUGUST · LAKES AND KARST CAVES ON OUR RETURN JOURNEY

On the final day of our trip, depending on our return flight time, we will visit some **particularly scenic locations,** either near our accommodation or on the way to the airport. Rural landscapes, **lakes surrounded by forests and mountains, and the numerous karst caves** found throughout the region will provide further photographic subjects, completing our visual record of one of the most beautiful corners of Eastern Europe.

The itinerary may be modified depending on weather conditions, wildlife activity or other circumstances that the guide considers relevant to the smooth running of the trip.











€ Precio

CROATIA AND SLOVENIA

5 DAYS / 4 NIGHTS

Minimum 4 people.
Maximum 6 people.

Single room
€ 2.150
/person

Double room
€ 1.980/person

Included

•4 nights' accommodation with breakfast at rural hotels associated with the wildlife photography activities.
•4 brown bear hide sessions at different locations.
•2 hide sessions for woodland and farmland birds.
•Transport throughout the tour.
•Travel insurance.
•Local guides.
•Bilingual tour leader (Spanish/English).

Not included

•International flights.
•Lunches and dinners in Croatia, and lunch on the final day in Slovenia if your flight departs in the afternoon.
•Drinks and food not included in the provided meals.
•Shopping and other personal expenses.

Reservation Deposit

• Booking Deposit: A non-refundable deposit of 30% is required.
• Payment deadline: July 9th, 2027.
• If the tour cannot take place due to a lack of participants, we will refund the deposit paid minus €100 to cover administrative costs.

Cancellation and refund policy

• If the participant withdraws after paying the deposit, €1,250 will be refunded (€100 is non-refundable to cover administrative costs).
• If you decide to cancel your trip, the refund will be made as follows:
Between 2 and 1 month before departure: 40% refund.
• Less than 30 days before departure: no refund.
• If you decide to return home before the end of the trip, please note that we will not be able to offer refunds for the unused portion of the tour.

Alojamiento

Hotel Kovaĉ https://kovac-kolpa.com/
Ana's Guest House https://guest-house-anak.slovenia-hotel.com/es/

*The hotels listed are subject to availability at the time of booking. If no rooms are available, alternative accommodation of the same category will be provided.

Flights

We recommend booking morning flights in order to attend the afternoon session—which begins around 1:00 PM—if you wish to follow the schedule for the first day.

Climatology

The summer climate is cool—moderately warm during the day—with temperatures ranging between 20°C and 25°C.

Required equipment

For wildlife photography, lenses ranging from 70–200mm up to 600mm—or even longer for greater distances—are recommended, as the distance to the bear can vary between approximately 10 and 50 meters.

Clothes

Although the trip takes place in summer, we recommend dressing in layers, as temperatures may drop slightly in mountainous areas.
It is very important to bring hiking footwear and waterproof clothing.





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