

Index

Tourist programmes and tours

Introduction	2-3
1. Hiking around Mljet	4-11
2. Walking	12-21
3. Learn about Mljet!	22-23
4. Row and experience!	24-27
5. Under the sea	28-31
5. Experience Mljet	32-33
7. Cycling	34-37

Natural, cultural, and historical resources

Flora and fauna	38-39
Geomorphological phenomena	40-41
Historical heritage	42-44
Stories and legends	45
Tradition	46-47

Introduction

Welcome to Mljet, a green oasis full of natural phenomena and cultural sites we inherited from many inhabitants of the island. This catalogue will present many ways for you to explore what the island has to offer, through various activities such as walking, cycling, hiking, kayaking, canoeing, and many others. Mljet is an ideal place for recreation and enjoying nature, so we invite you to choose the desired activity and embark on an adventure.

Tourist programmes and tours

Choose one of the 17 tours this catalogue offers to explore the green island. The tours are arranged by programmes, depending on the dominant activity, and each of them is marked on a map and described so you can know what to expect. Before leaving, find out about the weather. In spring and autumn tours are an ideal activity all day long, while we recommend starting early in the morning or later in the evening in summer to avoid high temperatures.

1. Hiking around Mljet

Short programme description

If hiking is your way to relax and enjoy the beauty of nature, you are at the right place. Mljet is a mountainous island made up of numerous relatively low peaks, so everyone can get some exercise on around 200 kilometres of its hiking trails. Beginner hikers can choose shorter sections, while more experienced ones can pass most of the trails for a bigger challenge. The tours below offer the optimal combination of forest paths, breathtaking viewpoints, and walks along the turquoise sea..

Available tours

- Mljet Mountain Bypass
- Sobra – Saplunara
- Kozarica – Tatinica
- Pomena – Open Sea

2. Walking

Short programme description

Mljet is an island made for walking because in a relatively short time you get a chance to see many beautiful places or just enjoy the unique landscape. There are several tours in this programme, varying in complexity and duration, and each of them gives you an opportunity to choose only one smaller segment, all depending on your wishes and the time you have.

Available tours

- Austrian Road
- Babino Polje – Odysseus Cave
- Olive Road (Babino Polje – Maranovići)
- Mljet National Park Walking Tour
- Prožurska Luka – Prožura

3. Learn about Mljet!

Short programme description

The island of Mljet was home to many civilisations and cultures that enjoyed its natural features: from the ancient Greeks and Romans to the Republic of Dubrovnik. Every culture has left its mark, and this programme guides you along their paths and teaches you about tradition and unique natural heritage.

Available tour

- Polače – the Islet of Saint Mary

4. Row and experience!

Short programme description

The island of Mljet is surrounded by numerous islets that are perfect canoeing and kayaking destinations. This programme offers several tours on different sides of the island that give you a different perspective of Mljet and allow you to discover hidden coves, semi-caves, and many other attractions.

Available tours

- 4 Islets Tour
- Sutmiholjska Bay – Odysseus Cave

5. Under the sea

Short programme description

Embark on a diving adventure in locations described as some of the most beautiful diving locations in the world by the renowned deep sea explorer Jacques Cousteau. Underwater walls, submerged caves, and a number of amphora sites prove that Mljet was on an important sea route of ancient galleys sailing the Adriatic. In this programme we recommend tours professionally guided by the diving centre.

Available tours

- Štit Crag
- Secret of the Ancient Ship

6. Experience Mljet

Short programme description

If you want to explore the ins and outs of Mljet, while experiencing its history and tradition, this programme (tour) meets all your needs.

Available tour

- Journey through Historical Settlements

7. Cycling







Short programme description

Not many visitors will resist the charms of riding on two wheels on Mljet. Whether you take an easy ride around the lake or go for longer distances, the landscape that will surround you will certainly make your effort worthwhile.

Available tours

- Cycling through the Park
- Accessing Blaca on Two Wheels

Map legend

Flora and fauna	
Geomorphological phenomena	
Historical heritage	
Stories and legends	
Tradition	
Photo spot	

Mljet Mountain Bypass



Programme description

The Mljet Mountain Bypass is the most popular and most complete tour on the island of Mljet, as it stretches from the National Park to the centre of the island. The exceptionally good geographical position, geological characteristics, and morphological richness of the landscape give you an opportunity to spend time in nature and get to know the abundant flora and fauna of the land, air, sea, and underwater. On this tour you will have the opportunity to climb the highest peak of the island, visit the most popular viewpoints, and see the historical sites in the places through which the tour passes while resting from hiking. The entire route has trail markings and stamps at checkpoints (KT) marked on the map.

Who it is for

This tour is perfect for anyone who wants to enjoy the beautiful nature of the island of Mljet. If divided into stages, it is intended for everyone.

1) POMENA – GOVEDARI (4 h, 8.5 km)

- A. Pomena (1 m)
- B. Posušni Borovac (26 m)
- C. Crjene stijene (126 m)
- D. Lenga (1 m)
- E. Mjendeli (91 m)

2) GOVEDARI – BLATO (6 h, 14 km)

- F. Veliki Gradac (157 m)
- G. Montokuc (236 m)
- H. Zle stijene (243 m)
- I. Veliki Planjak (392 m)
- J. Grabova glava (384 m)
- K. Strmica (110 yd)

3) BLATO – ROGOVIĆI – BABINO POLJE (5 h, 7.5 km)

- L. Dubovca (177 m)
- M. Vrh od Dola (260 m)
- N. Rogovići (353 m)

4) BABINO POLJE – VELIKI GRAD – SOBRA (5 h, 9.3 km)

- O. Veliki Grad (514 m), the highest peak of the island
- P. Veji kok (395 m)
- R. To Peskarija peak (302 m)
- S. Opor Dolac (175 m)
- T. Sobra (1 m)



What you can see and experience on this tour

Apart from the amazing view of the Small and Great Bridge and the forest of Aleppo pine and oak, you can see and experience the following on this tour:

The Church of St Nikola - one of the oldest parishes on the island, built in 13/14. st.

Blatina - near Blato, there is blatina, or an accumulation of brackish water resembling a lake. (More on p. 40)

Birds - there are about 120 different species of birds on Mljet, and due to water sources, their frequent gathering place is the swamps themselves. (More on p. 39)

Lookouts:

1. Veliki gradac
2. Veliki planjak - the highest peak of the National Park, and there is also a mountain lodge
3. Montokuc - the most famous lookout located within the National Park
4. Hornbeam head - one of the most beautiful lookouts on the island
5. Strmica - a lookout point above the Blato marsh
6. Big city - the highest peak of the island

Duration

- 4 days (around 20 h of walking)
- 40 km

Tour difficulty level (1-5)

K2, easy to challenging, depending on the section

What to prepare

- Appropriate clothing and footwear
- Enough water
- Head protection
- Mobile phone with a full battery
- Food
- Transportation – not a round trip

Sobra - Saplnunara



Programme description

This tour is a natural continuation of the Mljet Mountain Bypass, which includes the other part of the island. Along the way you will see amazing natural and historical sites, while at the very end of the tour you can relax in the shade of the wild stone pine forest and three sandy beaches.

Who it is for

As this tour is a continuation of the Mljet Mountain Bypass for the western part of the island, it is also intended for everyone because it can be divided into stages or done at once.

What you can see and experience on this tour

Blatina – another blatina (mud lake) is located above Sobra. (More on p. 40)

The story of the shipwreck of St Paul - with a view over the town of Saplnunara we recommend the story of one of the most famous guests of the island ever. (More on p. 45)

Prožura - a settlement that originated in the Middle Ages and was a place where Dubrovnik nobles rested during the Republic of Dubrovnik. We recommend a visit to the local cemetery and the church of St Martin, which offers a beautiful view of Prožurska Luka and Prožurska blatina. (More on p. 43)

Views and viewpoints - view over Okuklje and the viewpoint over Saplnunara.

Costumes and folklore - as the island of Mljet has been quite isolated from significant influences from the mainland throughout history, it has managed to preserve the unique tradition of folk costumes and dances. (More on p. 47.)

Pine forest - a forest of wild stone pine and part of the island protected as a reserve of natural rarities. (More on p. 38.)

Duration

- 2 days
- 20 km

Tour difficulty level (1-5)

K2, easy

What to prepare

- Appropriate clothing and footwear (hiking boots or trekking shoes)
- Enough water
- Head protection
- Mobile phone with a full battery
- Food.
- Transportation – not a round trip



- A. Sobra
- B. Prožura
- C. Okuklje
- D. Maranovići
- E. Korita
- F. Saplnunara

Kozarica-Tatinica



Programme description

This tour is characterised by a panoramic trail by and along the rocks overlooking the sea and nearby islands. Not far from Tatinica, the final point of the tour, you will find Polače, a place known for the remains of ancient buildings. It is very likely that you will also come across a few wild goats that live on the rocks. In the summer months, you can find refreshment in Križice Bay.

Who it is for

Those who love walks by the sea, photography, as well as visitors who stay in Kozarica, the place where the trail starts. Keep in mind that part of the trail includes rocks, so the terrain is not easy.

What you can see and experience on this tour

Islands, islets, and cliffs – 4 small islands are located in the immediate vicinity of the Tatinica Bay: Kobrava, Tajnik, Ovrata, and Moračnik. (More on p. 41)

Birds – of the numerous bird species on Mljet, the most frequent ones are seagulls and European shags. (More on p. 39)

Duration

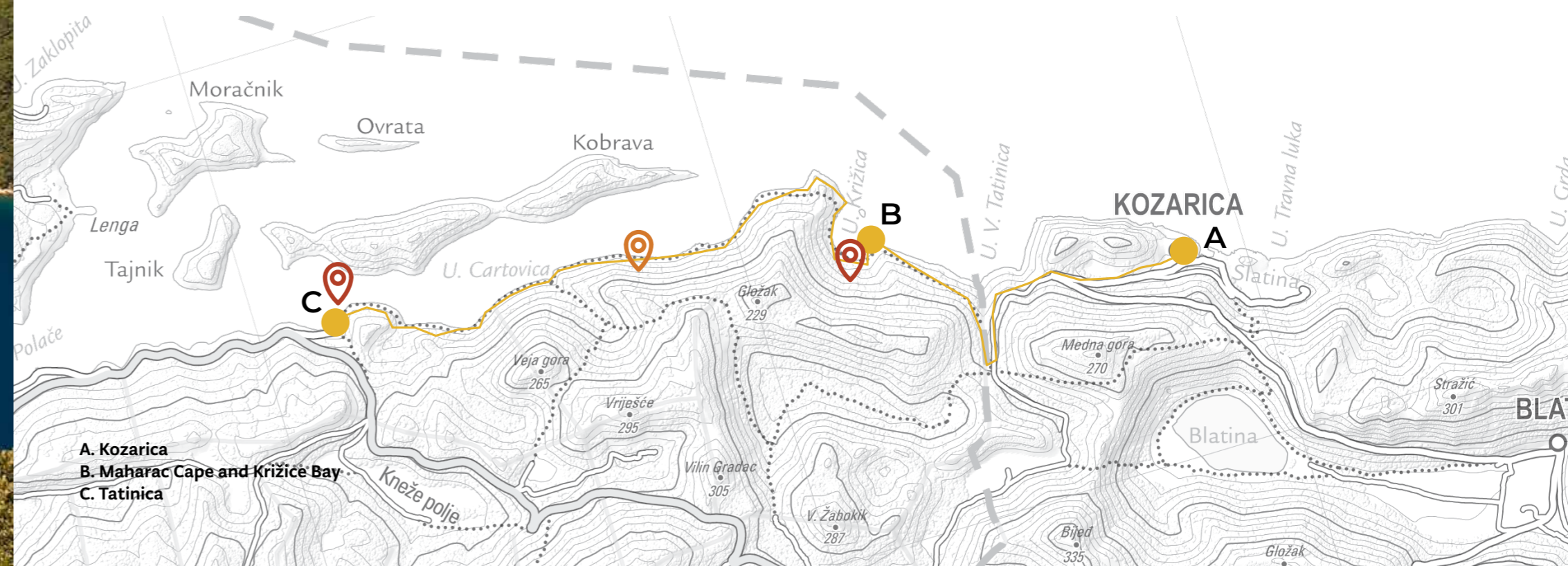
- 2 h
- 5 km

Tour difficulty level (1-5)

K2, easy

What to prepare

- Boots for going through the rocky terrain
- Water
- Swimwear
- Transportation – not a round trip



Pomena – Open Sea



Description of the programme:

A perfect tour for exploring the National Park from a different perspective. This tour will take you on the promenade from Pomena along the shores of the Small and Great Lake (Malo i Veliko jezero). This path will take you to one of the most beautiful spots on the lake – right in front of the Islet of Saint Mary. Going further down the path, you will reach the Great Bridge (Veliki most), which you will not cross but head through the forest of Aleppo pine and holm oak to a place where you can enjoy the view of the channel and the open sea.

Who it is for

All visitors who want a different perspective of the National Park with an easy tour and a visit to places whose beauty inspires.

Na ovoj turi možete vidjeti i doživjeti

Islet of Saint Mary – a beautiful view of this natural landmark is offered from Janik Cape. (More on p. 41)

Great Bridge – there are many stories and historical curiosities about this bridge, which was renovated in 2016. (More on p. 44)

Great and Small Lake – the geomorphological phenomenon of Mljet lakes is actually a sea bay that was formed by sea level rising in the post-glacial period and was gradually filled with sea water through the Solin Channel.

The lakes hide the specific underwater flora and fauna and are characterised by a unique current taking sea water in and out of them. (More on p. 40)

Duration

- 3 h

Tour difficulty level (1-5)

K1, easy

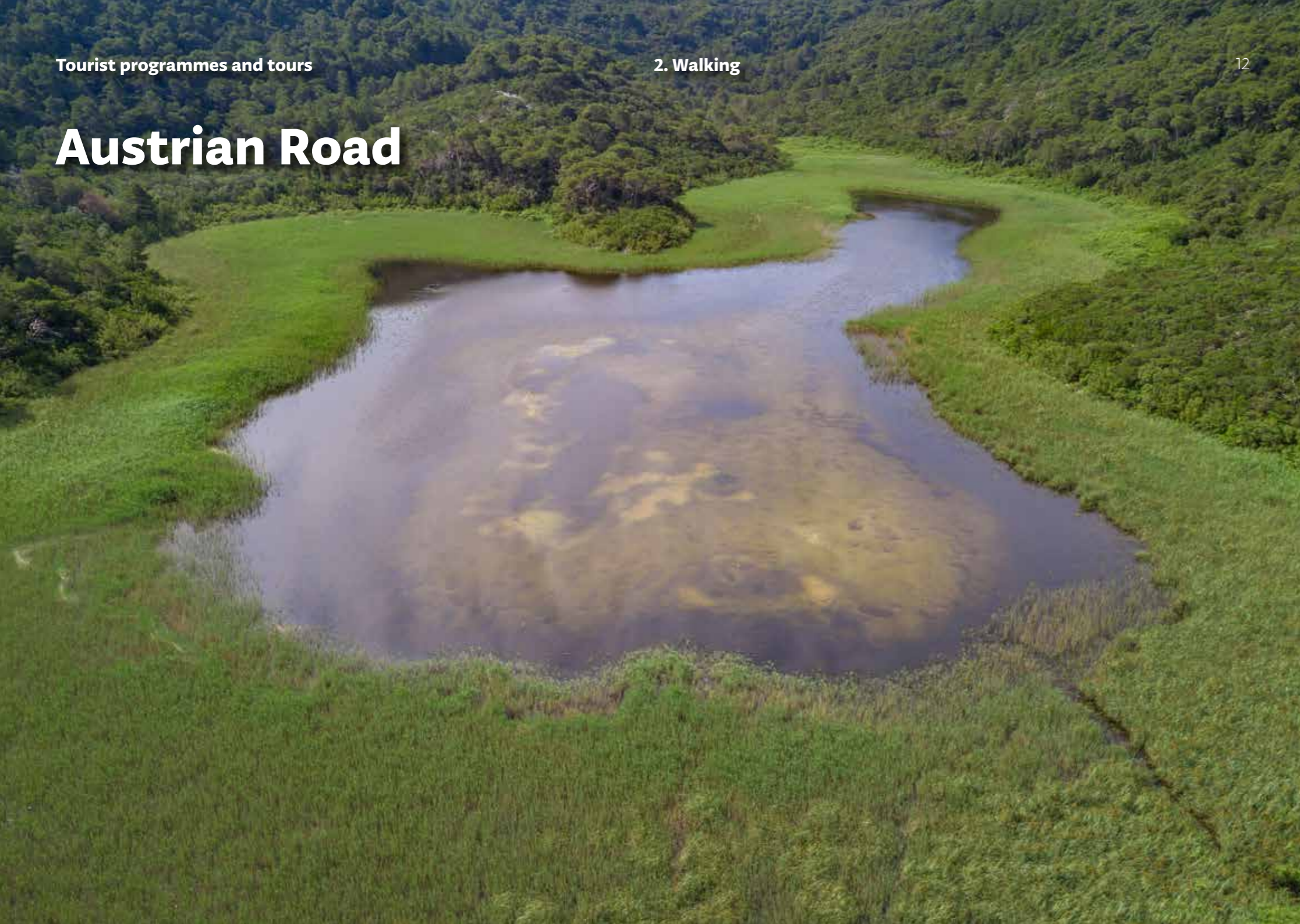
What to prepare

- Hiking sticks
- Adequate footwear
- Water



- A. Pomena
- B. Islet of Saint Mary
- C. Great Bridge
- D. The open sea

Austrian Road



Description of the programme:

The Austrian Road is a hiking trail that offers a relaxing walk in a beautiful landscape, while visitors get a chance to become a part of history themselves. This trail is part of a wide road built by the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and which connected the main port of Sobra with Babino Polje, among other places. Out of a total of 6 km, 850 m of educational trails are accessible today for easy and short walks, with a view of the blatina and the sea, testifying to the skills and perseverance of the builders of that time. Another remnant of this road is visible in Prožura, and the tour is available as part of this programme.

Who it is for

For all those who want to be active, while experiencing the Mljet flora and fauna, blatina as a natural phenomenon, and learning something about the history of Mljet in a short walk from Sobra.

What you can see and experience on this tour

Forest of Aleppo pine and holm oak - the forest of autochthonous oak species and Aleppo pine planted by the ancient Greeks for shipbuilding. (More on p. 38.)

Mongoose - as mongooses live in this area, there is a (small) chance that you will come across one. (More on p. 38.)

Blatina - the trail offers a view of one of the rare phenomena of brackish water characteristic of Croatian islands. (More on p. 40)

Birds - as one of the main migration routes of migratory birds, the island of Mljet is an important resting and feeding ground for many species, especially in an area rich in drinking water (blatina and slatina). (More on p. 39)

Duration

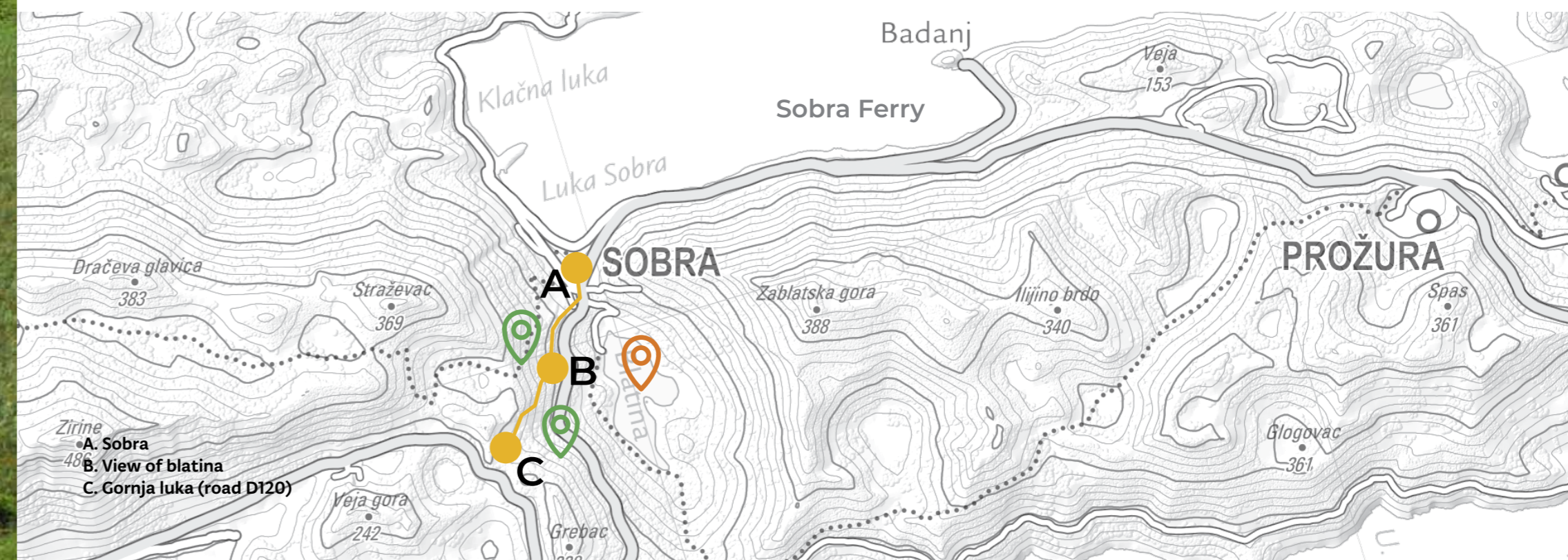
- 30 min in one direction
- 1 km

Tour difficulty level (1-5)

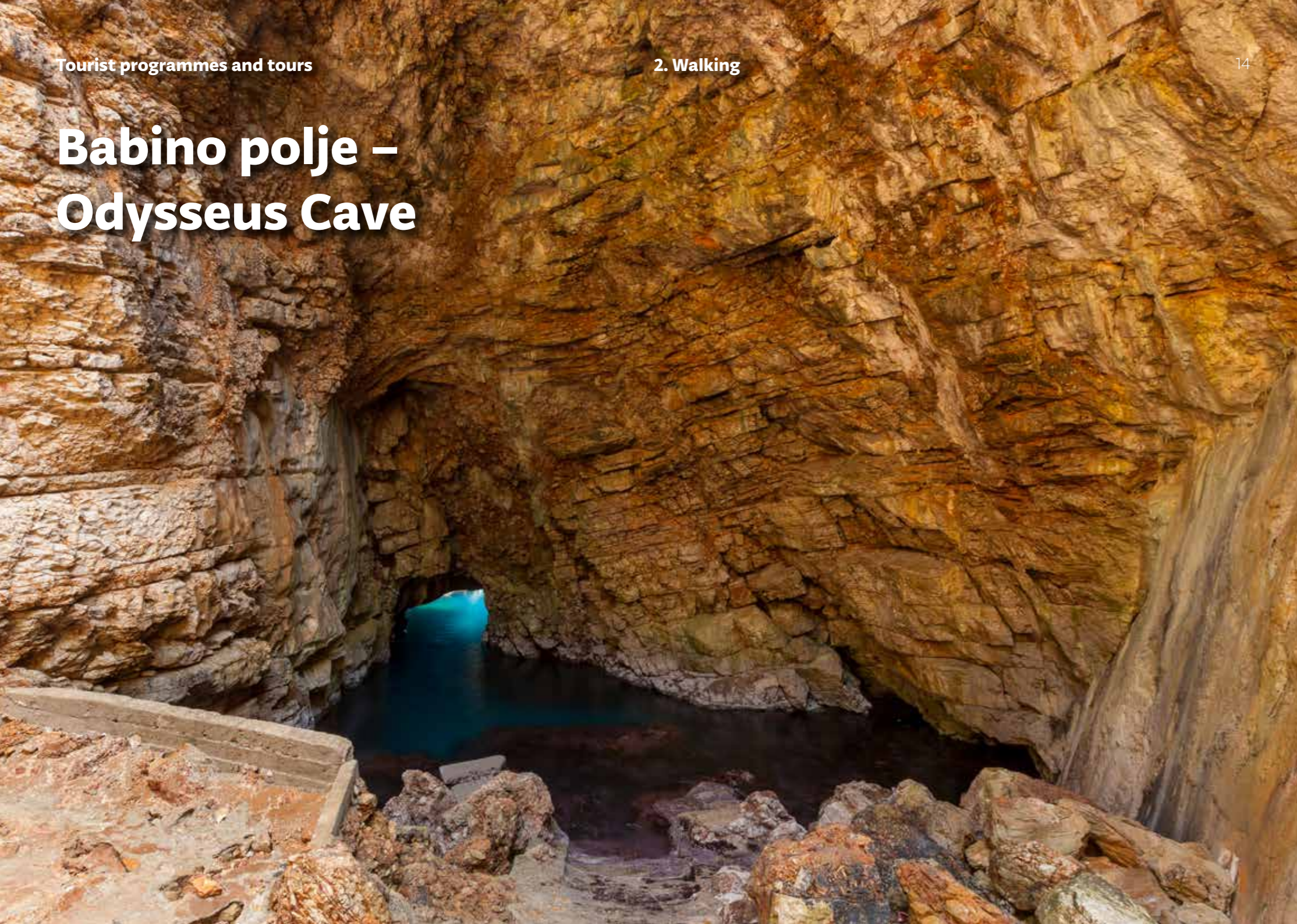
2

What to prepare

- Enough water
- Adequate footwear (sneakers, boots)



Babino polje – Odysseus Cave



Description of the programme:

Odysseus Cave is one of the most attractive natural phenomena on the island of Mljet. It is accessible in several ways, but if you decide to walk from the nearby Babino Polje, this cave will not be the only attraction you will see. On your way you will pass through many olive groves and find even more places with beautiful views for unforgettable photos.

Who it is for

For all those willing to walk a little further to see natural attractions (Odysseus Cave). Due to its low level of difficulty, this trail is also suitable for parents with small children.

What you can see and experience on this tour

Odysseus Cave - this unique natural phenomenon is an ideal backdrop for beautiful photos. (More on p. 40)

Legend of Odysseus - the cave is named after Odysseus, the hero of Homer's Iliad, who, according to the said work, stopped on this island. (More on p. 45)

Olive groves and vineyards - on your way from Babino Polje you will see a number of olive groves and vineyards, some of the remaining agricultural branches on Mljet. (More on p. 46).

Duration

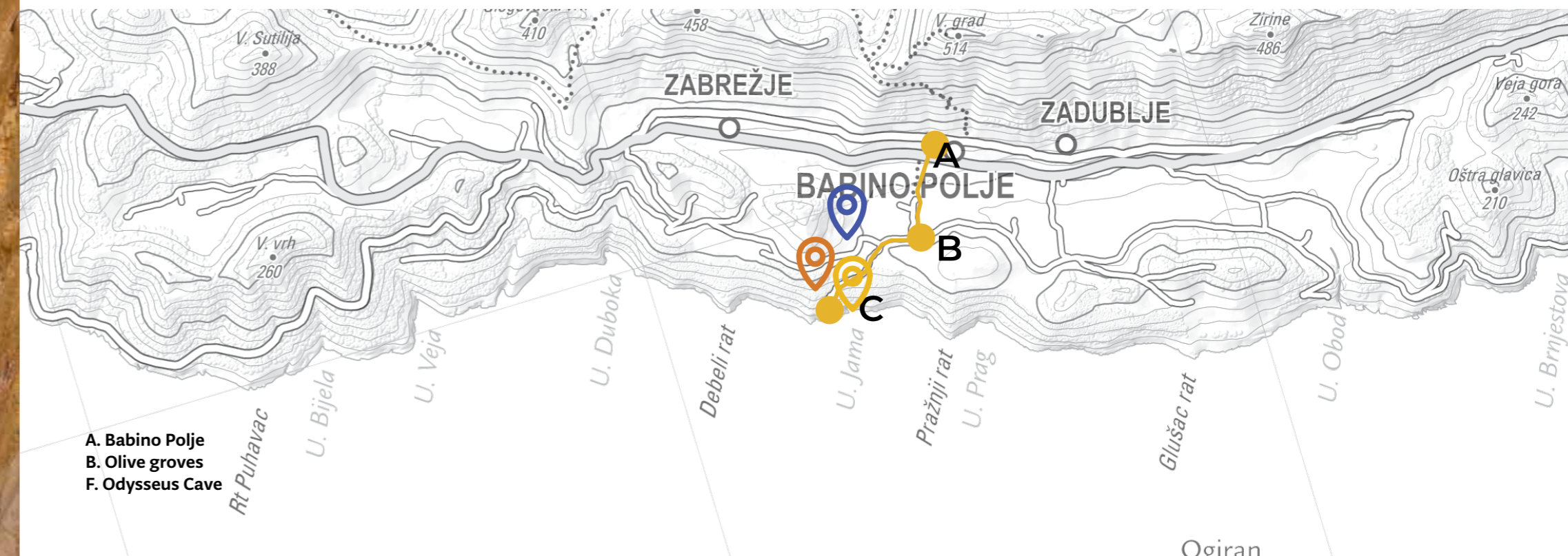
- 20 min in A – B direction
- 45 min in B – A direction
- 1 km long

Tour difficulty level (1-5)

2

What to prepare

- Enough water
- Adequate footwear (sneakers, boots)



A. Babino Polje
B. Olive groves
C. Odysseus Cave

Olive Road (Babino polje – Maranovići)



Description of the programme:

With its starting point at the largest olive grove – Babino Polje, this tour will take you through numerous historical monuments and olive groves all the way to Maranovići. Therefore, do not be fooled by its name because olive groves and growing are just part of what this historical and agricultural trail has to offer. All the way to Maranovići you will be able to enjoy the view of olive groves and the outer part of the island, towards Italy, which also means many beautiful photos. At the end of the trail you can see monuments such as: Fiječina house from the 16th century, Sotnica, the Duke’s Palace, the Church of St Blaise, the church of Holy Salvation, and drywall.

Who it is for

This is a trail for those who want to experience agriculture on the island, discover the skills of old crafts, and see interesting dislocated cultural monuments. Set aside enough time for this beautiful tour.

What you can see and experience on this tour

Olive growing - during this tour you will be surrounded by olive groves that testify to the tradition of this agricultural branch, and you will also have the opportunity to visit the oil mill and hear about the oil production process first-hand. (More on p. 46)

Remains of churches - on your way to Maranovići you will pass several churches and cultural monuments worth a short detour.

Duke’s Palace - this 16th century house was the seat of the duke of Mljet, and nowadays it features an ethno collection. (More on p. 42)

The village of Maranovići - at the end of your tour you will find a place that owes its progress precisely to olive growing, and the Parish Church of St Anthony is a must visit. (More on p. 43)

Odysseus Cave - take a short detour and rest with a view of this natural phenomenon. (More on p. 40)

Sotnica – a building in which the Benedictines exercised judicial power until the end of the 15th century. (More on p. 42)

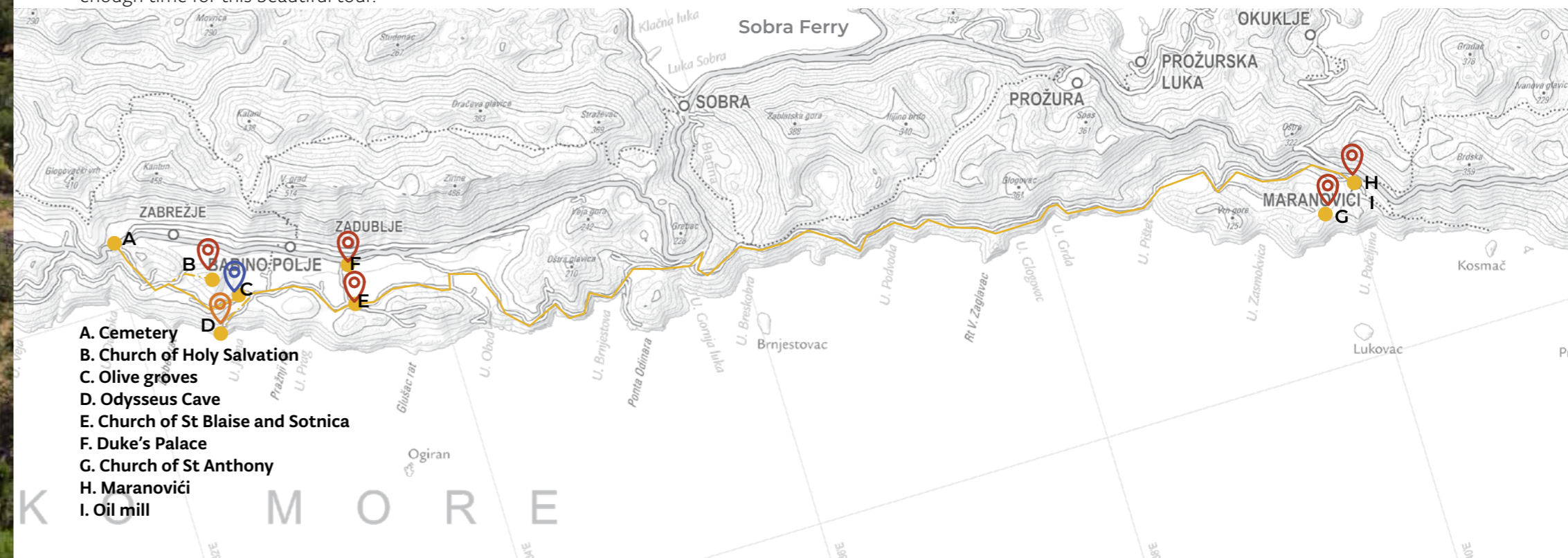
- 3 h

Tour difficulty level (1-5)

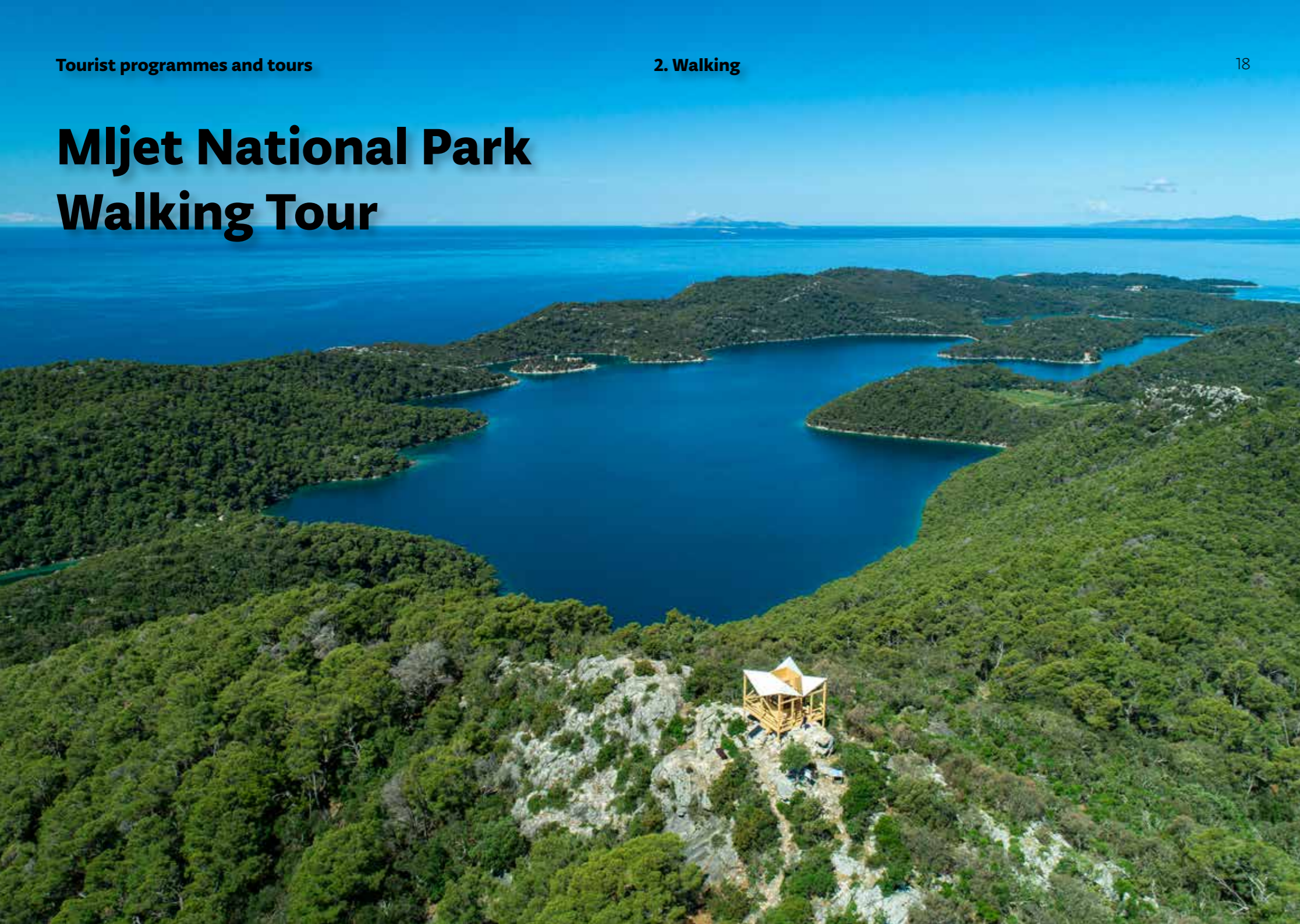
2 - 3

What to prepare

- Sun protection
- Lots of water
- Adequate footwear (sneakers, boots)



Mljet National Park Walking Tour



Description of the programme:

This walking tour offers you a unique experience of the Mljet National Park. Whether your starting point is Pomena, Polače, or even Goveđari, any direction on this trail allows you to experience all the landmarks this area has to offer, and there are many.

Check the different directions and segments and choose at least one, whether it is an easy walk from Pomena to the lake or, for example, a walk along the lake shore from Polače to Pomena.

Who it is for

An extensive walking package for all visitors to the Mljet National Park. You can do the tour in its entirety or in smaller segments, so it is intended for everyone – beginners, recreational athletes, and professionals.

What you can see and experience on this tour

Lake phenomenon - walk along two salt lakes bordered by a forest, one of the biggest attractions of Mljet. (More on p. 40)

The Islet of St Mary and the Benedictine Monastery - this islet in the middle of the lake, which houses the magnificent 12th century monastery, is just a short boat ride away. (More on p. 41)

Goveđari - the first inhabited place in the National Park territory, but also the only one that is not located on the coast. (More on p. 43)

Orchids - if you go for a walk during spring, you will have a chance to admire the many individuals of this endangered species. (More on p. 39)

Guvna - in this cultural and historical site near the village of Polače, you can learn about the old ways of threshing grain. (More on p. 46)

Montokuc Viewpoint - this newly reconstructed viewpoint at the height of 253 m offers a beautiful view of the lakes and an opportunity to take photos.

Duration

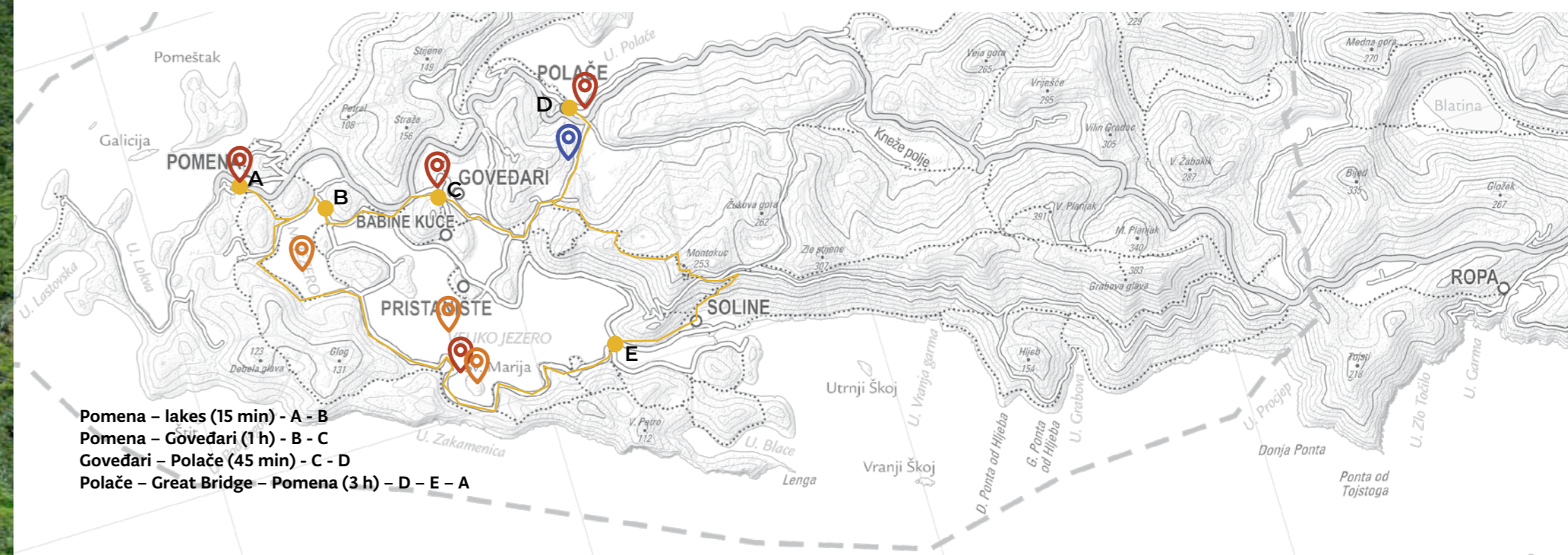
- A total of 4 h (possible division into segments)

Tour difficulty level (1-5)

1 - 3

What to prepare

- Appropriate footwear
- Sun protection
- Lots of water



Prožurska Luka – Prožura



Description of the programme:

The same as the Austrian Road tour, this tour also leans on the old Austrian road that connected Prožurska Luka and Prožura. Prožura is one of the few places not visible from the sea, so you have to climb to reach it. Your effort will pay off as the place offers many historical landmarks and breathtaking views.

Who it is for

This short but steep 2-kilometre walk is intended for all those who want a lesson in history, photography, and a short hike.

What you can see and experience on this tour

Prožura - a medieval place hidden in the hills, known for its many stories and customs. (More on p. 43)

Medieval churches - you will see many churches, each of which has its own attractions and historical significance

Natural phenomena - the place offers a view of Prožurska blatina and several islets near Prožurska Luka. (More on pp. 40 and 41)

Duration

21

- 2 h 30 min (with sightseeing)
- 2 km

Tour difficulty level (1-5)

2

What to prepare

- Hiking shoes
- Lots of water



A. Prožurska Luka
B. Church of St Rocco
C. Prožura
D. Church of Holy Trinity
E. Church of St Martin

Polače – Islet of Saint Mary



Description of the programme:

This tour shows the cultural and historical heritage hidden in the National Park. On a relatively short route you will get to know the cultures of many inhabitants of Mljet, their safe ports, customs, and crafts, as well as hidden islands and places of prayer.

Who it is for

For all those looking for an easy, primarily educational walk, intended for children but also for all interested ages.

What you can see and experience on this tour

Polače - a place that has records of human activity since the time of the Greeks and Romans, probably due to the safety of its port and its proximity to drinking water sources, as evidenced by the remains of a Roman palace and a basilica. (More on p. 44)

Guvna - a unique cultural landmark and a place where grain used to be threshed and locals gathered. (More on p. 46)

Islet of Saint Mary - within its Great Lake, the island of Mljet hides an islet that is surprisingly rich in historical sites, as it was home to Benedictines for many years. (More on p. 41)

Orchids - interesting orchid flowers (mostly of the Italian orchid species) grow in several places in the area of the National Park. This is an endangered species that is extremely rare in other areas. (More on p. 39)

Duration

- 2 h to 2 h and 30 min

Tour difficulty level (1-5)

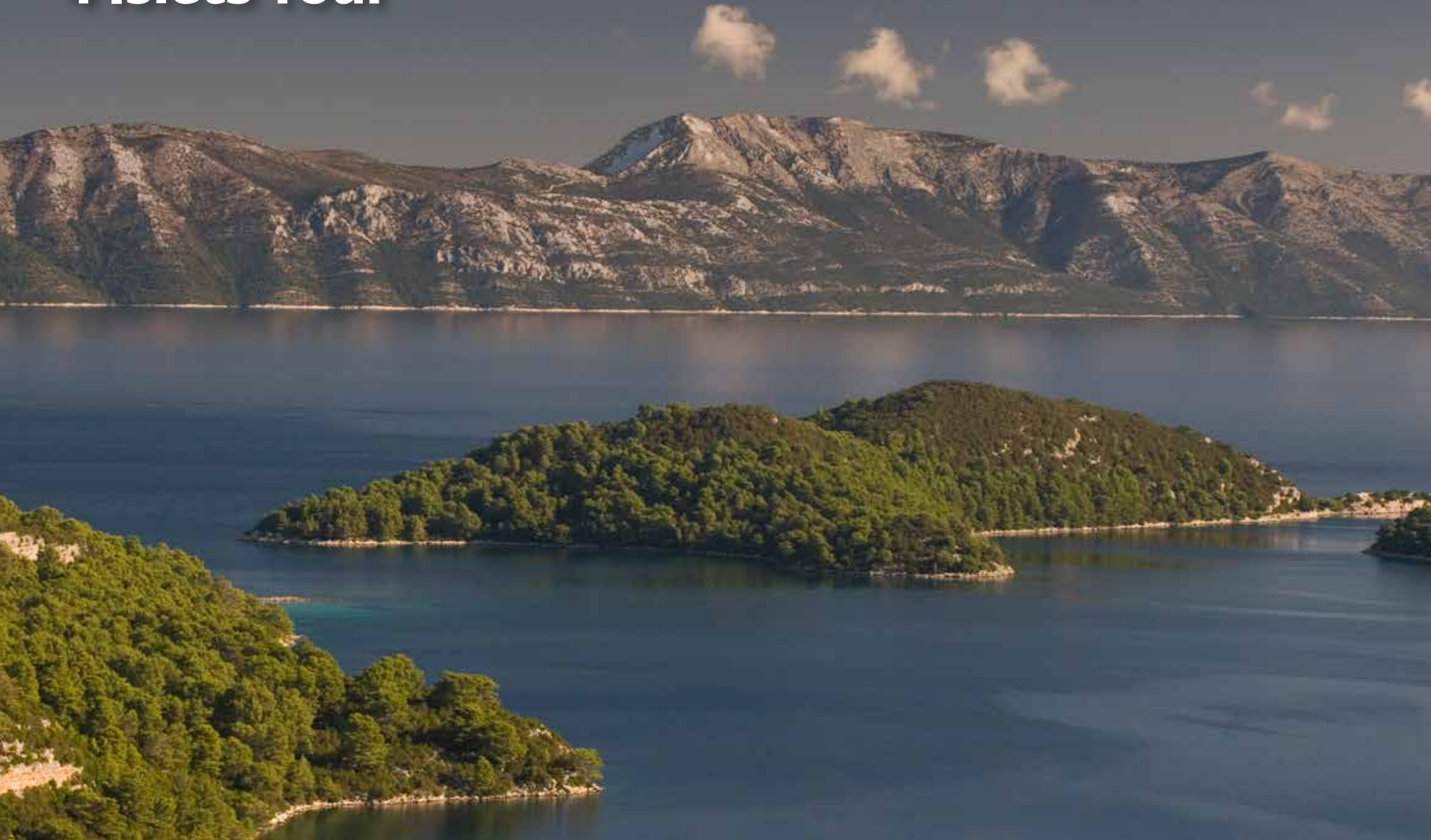
1

What to prepare

- Clothing and footwear appropriate for walking in nature
- Enough water
- Head protection



4 Islets Tour



Description of the programme:

This tour covers the northern part of the Mljet National Park and includes many interesting islets. During this tour there is also the possibility of renting a sea kayak and organising a departure from Tatinica, which includes food, beverages, equipment, and various interesting stories and anecdotes from this area. Expect plenty of fun, beautiful swimming locations, caves, and places in which you can take unforgettable photos.

Who it is for

If moving at a slow pace, this tour is suitable for all ages. It offers views of numerous islets and exploration of places inaccessible by foot.

What you can see and experience on this tour

Underwater Biodiversity - Mljet is characterised by a crystal clear sea that has amazed the famous oceanographer and deep sea explorer Jacques Cousteau. (More on p. 39)
The islets of Kobrava, Ovrata, Moračnik, Tajnik - a large number of islets is characteristic of the island of Mljet. Ranked by indentation, Mljet takes the fourth place among big Croatian islands. (More on p. 41)

Duration

- 3 h 30 min

Tour difficulty level (1-5)

3

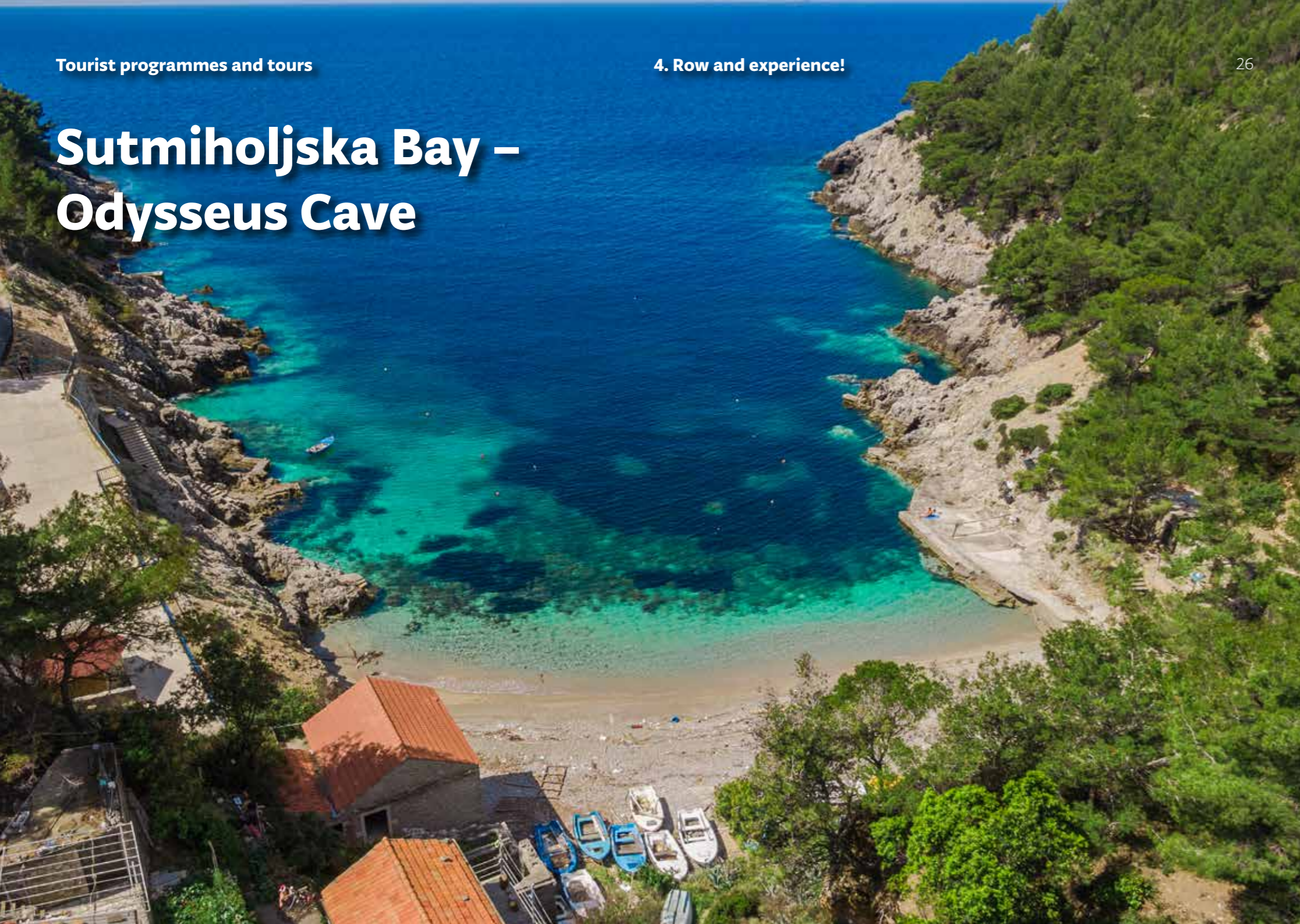
What to prepare

- Sea kayak
- Swimwear
- Headgear
- Water
- Sunscreen



- A. Tatinica Bay
- B. Lighthouse between Kobrava and Mljet
- C. Islet of Ovrata
- D. Islet of Moračnik
- E. Lenga Cape
- F. Islet of Tajnik
- G. Tatinica Bay

Sutmiholjska Bay – Odysseus Cave



Description of the programme:

You can fully experience the Odysseus Cave as a unique phenomenon only if you swim or sail into it or move a bit away from it in the sea.

This tour starts from the Sutmiholjska beach, where you can park your vehicle and swim at the beginning or end of the tour (or both). After that, you will start with the panoramic sea kayak ride over more than 7 bays, the last of which is the bay where the sea entrance to the Odyssey Cave is located.

Who it is for

For all those who want to see the Odysseus Cave from the sea perspective, visit one of the islets around Mljet, and take part in a pleasant activity at sea.

What you can see and experience on this tour

Odysseus Cave - an egg-shaped cave that looks like a pit or a whole in the ground from the perspective of a walker on the mainland, while it takes on the outlines of a real cave from the perspective of a vessel.

(More on p. 40)

Legend of Odysseus - according to a legend of Mljet, the islet of Ogiran near the bay of Jama is precisely the cliff where Odysseus suffered a shipwreck according to the Iliad, after which he spent 7 years in a cave (according to the story – Odysseus Cave) captured by the nymph Calypso.

(More on p. 45)

Duration

- 3 h

Tour difficulty level (1-5)

2

What to prepare

- Sea kayak
- Swimwear
- Headgear
- Water
- Sunscreen



Štit Crag



Description of the programme:

The Štit Crag on the southwestern part of the island of Mljet is a very attractive diving location. In this part of Mljet, the seabed is rich in flora and fauna, so we can find the dusky grouper, scorpionfish, moray, and especially lobsters. Schools of greater amberjack and Adriatic barracuda are common, and skilled divers can also find red corals. This crag faces the Lastovo archipelago, and it can be accessed by boat from Pomena, offering a beautiful view of the unusual rocks that adorn this part of the coast.

Who it is for

For all experienced and inexperienced divers who want an unforgettable experience of fantastic colours and shapes of the underwater world

What you can see and experience on this tour

Pomena - once the port of Govedari, nowadays it is a tourist village that is full of visitors and many contents in summer.
Rocks and cliffs - a boat trip offers a beautiful and unique panoramic view of Mljet – indented coast, cliffs, rocks, and numerous islands. (More on p. 41)
Underwater biodiversity - due to the greater amount of light on the south side of the island, you will find an abundance of colours and many species of marine fauna. (More on p. 39)

Duration

- A total of 2.5 h
 - Diving time: 1 h

Tour difficulty level (1-5)

3 (tour can be adjusted depending on the diver's experience)

What to prepare

- Necessary diving equipment



A. Pomena
 B. Special forms of coast
 C. Štit Crag

Secret of the Ancient Ship



Description of the programme:

This is the only tour whose exact location will remain a secret due to the delicacy of the archaeological values it offers. At a hidden offshore location between Pomena (also the starting point of the tour) and Polače lies a real archaeological treasure created by an ancient shipwreck that occurred 2000 years ago. In addition to the remains of the ancient ship, you will see numerous amphorae that the ship carried for wine, fish, and other produce, but also the sea world full of sponges, octopuses, and various fish of all shapes and colours.

Who it is for

Considering its archaeological significance, the tour was designed for photography enthusiasts, especially photography under water. This tour is exclusively guided and requires the involvement of a diving centre.

What you can see and experience on this tour

- Polače** - a place with traces of settlements since ancient times, when the Romans built an ancient palace in the territory of this village. (More on p. 44)
- Rocks and cliffs** - you will experience a different perspective of the island with a view of the indented and rocky coast of the island of Mljet. (More on p. 41)
- Seabed** - an ancient ship and more than 160 amphorae tell the story of the time. (More on p. 39)

Duration

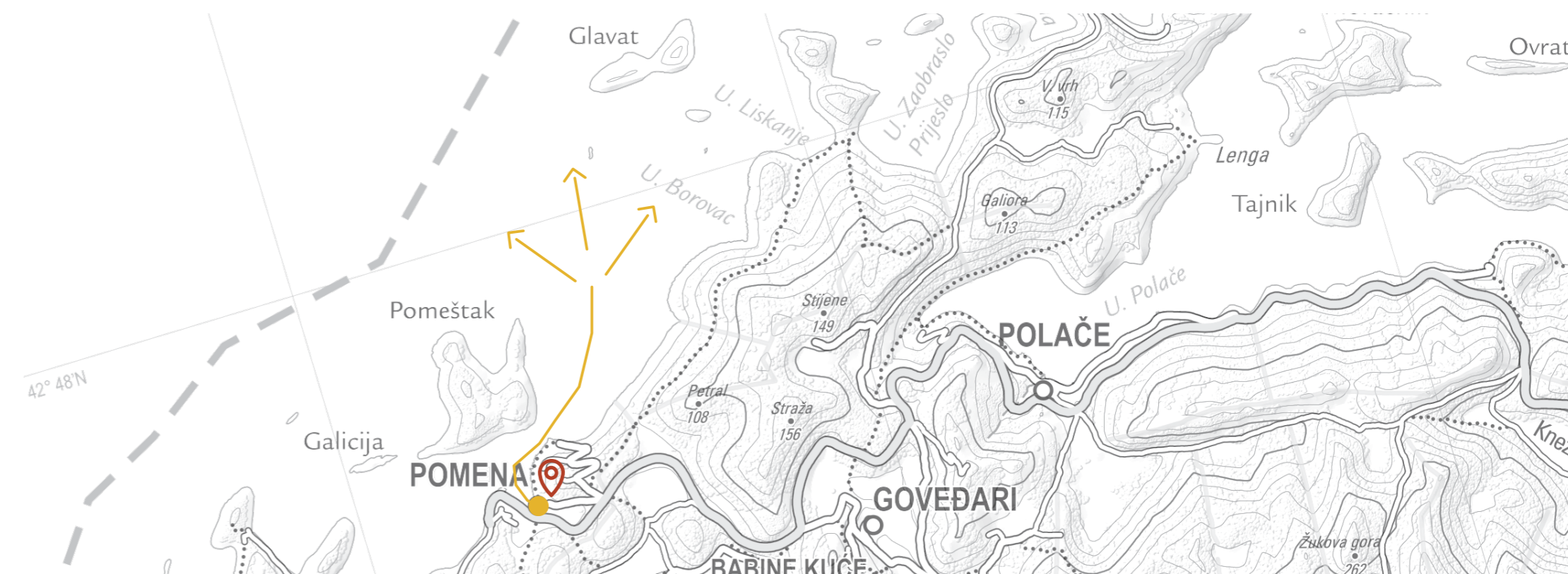
- A total of 2.5 h
- Diving time: 1 h

Tour difficulty level (1-5)

3 (tour can be adjusted depending on the diver's experience)

What to prepare

- Necessary diving equipment
- Diving centre engagement



Journey through Historical Settlements



Description of the programme:

Get ready for take-off! In this tour you will have the opportunity to experience the entire island of Mljet. After exploring the lakes of Mljet and all that they have to offer, go to the village of Polače, where this adventure (tour) starts. From Polače and Goveđari it goes to the east of the island. The tour offers views of many historical and natural landmarks of the island, an addition to what the National Park offers, such as the history of old Mljet settlements, the blatina phenomena, old crafts and customs, and finally rewards you by swimming on beautiful sandy beaches.

Who it is for

For all those who want to experience the entire island without getting physically tired.

What you can see and experience on this tour

- Village of Polače** - the area of today's Polače is one of the first inhabited areas on the island, as evidenced by the many remains of ancient civilisations. (More on p. 44)
- Remains of an ancient Roman palace** - the former Roman palace has become part of Polače, and for a moment it will give you an opportunity to become part of history. (More on p. 42)
- Remains of Roman basilicas** - on the east and west sides of Polače you can visit the remains of early Christian basilicas. (More on p. 42)

- Goveđari** - an amphitheatre-shaped place and the first inhabited place within the National Park that exudes tradition. (More on p. 43)
- Blatina** - one of several deposits of brackish water, located near the town of Blato. (More on p. 40)
- Duke's Palace in Babino Polje** - ethno collection in the former seat of the duke of Mljet. (More on p. 42)
- The legend of the origin of Babino polje** - there are many interesting stories linked to the largest place on the island, including the story of its origin. (More on p. 45)
- Babino Polje** - throughout history, and even today, the most populous place on the island and the seat of the duke. (More on p. 44)
- Village of Maranovići** - one of the oldest places on the island, the location of the Church of St Anthony from the 19th century. (More on p. 43)
- Korita** - a place from the 15th century named after natural stone depressions in which water was filled. (More on p. 43)
- Village of Prožura** - a place dominated by the Church of St Martin, the Church of St Rocco and Kaštio (square fortress – kaštio) from the 17th century. (More on p. 43)
- Strašinate** - in Babino Polje or Maranovići, ask the locals about strašinate, the stories about elves, werewolves, demons, and mermaids frightening small children.
- Saplunara and Limuni beaches** - unique due to the preserved sand dunes, these beaches are the perfect end of the tour. (More on p. 40)
- St Paul the Shipwrecked** - according to the story, the great shipwreck of St Paul from the Acts of the Apostles took place on the southeast coast of Mljet. (More on p. 45)

Duration

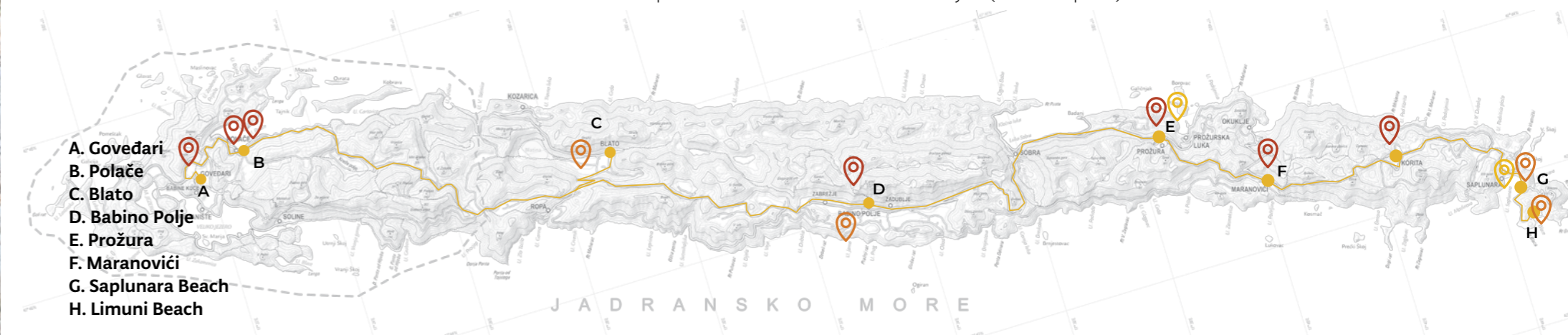
- 1 hour by car
- 1 h walk
- Sightseeing – optional
- Swimming hours – optional

Tour difficulty level (1-5)

1

What to prepare

- Car or similar means of transport



Cycling through the Park



Description of the programme:

If you are willing and the weather is working in your favour, one of the most beautiful ways to see the Mljet National Park is definitely by cycling. As there is practically no traffic near the lakes, you can enjoy the fresh air of the Aleppo pine and holm oak forests carefree and easy.

Who it is for

Considering that you can choose one or more stages, the tour is intended for all those interested in a shorter or more challenging bike ride through the beautiful landscape.

What you can see and experience on this tour

Orchids (in spring) - due to the preserved environment, this endangered species is common in the area of the Mljet National Park. Check out why its flowers earned it the name "naked man". (More on p. 39)

Great and Small Lake - although riding along the lake is already a truly special feeling, circling the Great and Small Lake offers a new perspective. (More on p. 40)

Small bridge - the link between the Great and Small Lake, known as a place for resting and swimming, as well as for the sea currents that change direction every 6 hours. (More on p. 44)

Great Bridge - connects the Great Lake with the Solin Channel and the open sea, and there are many stories and historical facts about it. (More on p. 44)

Blatina - one of the four accumulations of brackish water on the island, which belong to the network of protected sites - Natura 2000. (More on p. 40)

Duration

- 2 h

Tour difficulty level (1-5)

1 - 2

What to prepare

- Your own bike or rent-a-bike
- Enough water



Accessing Blaca on Two Wheels



Description of the programme:

After visiting the Mljet National Park, the opposite side of the island has a slightly different landscape for a panoramic bike ride. This relatively short ride will require a bit more time as there are many spots for taking photos and swimming.

Who it is for

For all those who want a panoramic ride and plenty of places to stop to take beautiful photos.

What you can see and experience on this tour

St. Paul the Shipwrecked - according to the legend but also the available historical information, St Paul experienced a shipwreck precisely in this part of Mljet, and the possible location of the shipwreck is visible from Podškoji in Saplunara (point A). (More on p. 45)

Sandy beaches - three natural sandy beaches will begin and end your tour. (More on p. 40)

Islands, islets, cliffs - the indentation of the Mljet coast, which is known far and wide and has been sung and described in numerous historical works, shows its charms through Veliki and Mali Škoj in this tour too. (More on p. 41)

Duration

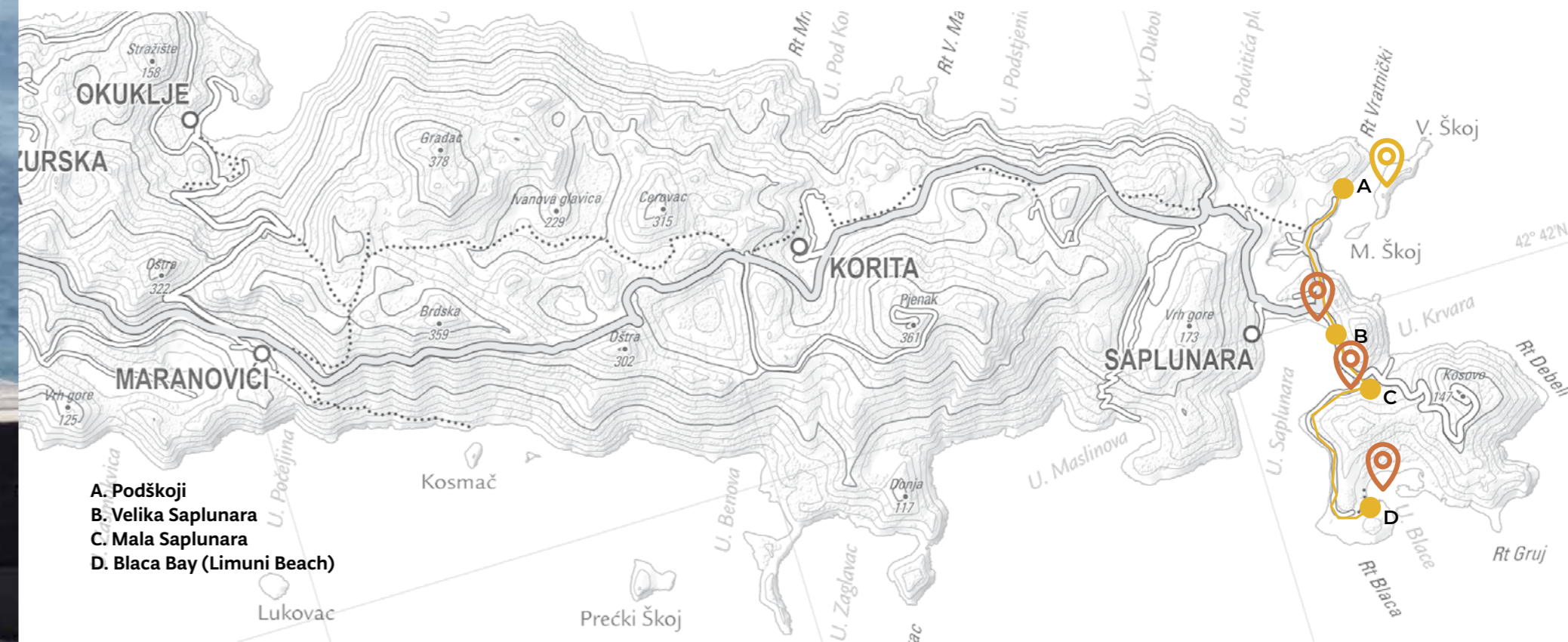
- 1 h

Tour difficulty level (1-5)

3

What to prepare

- Own bike or rent-a-bike
- Lots of water
- Swimwear



1.1

Flora and fauna

1.2

Flora and fauna

1.3

Flora and fauna

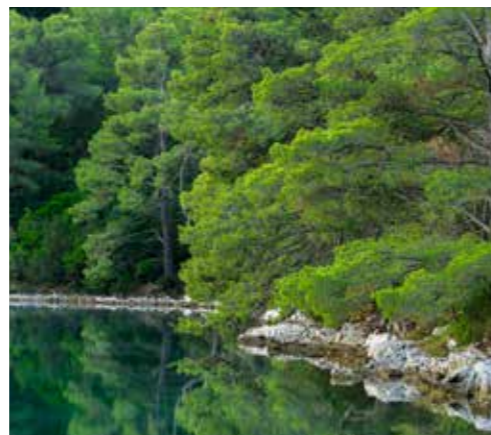
Natural, cultural, and historical resources

In this chapter we will describe all the natural, cultural, and historical resources, traditions, stories and legends of the island of Mljet that are mentioned in the tours.



Mongoose

At the beginning of the 20th century, there were many horned vipers in the area of the island of Mljet, killing cattle and, less frequently, even people with their bites. That is why the Ministry of Agriculture in Vienna made a decision in 1910 to bring mongooses, natural enemies of snakes, to the island of Mljet. The small Indian mongoose belongs to the feline family. They are very skilful and agile hunters. In studies conducted on mongooses, they were shown to be more resistant to snake venom than other animals. Nowadays, the mongoose is considered a foreign invasive species on the island of Mljet, as well as in many other parts of the world where it was introduced.



Aleppo pine and holm oak forest

The main reason for declaring this part of Mljet island a national park in 1960 was the preservation of its forests. More than 90% of the mainland of Mljet National Park is now covered with forest vegetation where two forest communities dominate: holm oak community in the northern exposures and Aleppo pine community with an understory of evergreen deciduous trees of varying densities in the southern exposures. Communities are not separate but are intertwined. The Aleppo pine is a domesticated species brought to Mljet during the time of the Greeks, probably due to their needs for building and repairing ships at the time.



Pine (stone pine)

A coniferous tree from the pine family, widespread in southern Europe and western Asia around the Mediterranean. In Croatia, these trees are mostly planted and grow on the coast, but pine is considered an autochthonous species precisely on Mljet, i.e. its eastern coast. These trees can grow up to 25 metres and are characterised by tall canopies and edible seeds – pine nuts.

1.4

Flora and fauna

1.5

Flora and fauna

1.6

Flora and fauna

1.7

Flora and fauna



Birds

Mljet is located on one of the main migration routes of migratory birds and thus represents important resting and feeding ground for many species. For more than 8 years, the condition of several important bird species has been monitored on a regular annual basis in the Mljet National Park: the Audouin's gull, the peregrine falcon, the European shag, the European honey buzzard, and the common tern. The presence of other bird species is also recorded. So far, 134 species have been recorded in the wider area of the Mljet National Park.



Orchids

Due to the preserved nature on Mljet, endangered plant species are frequent. Thus, around thirty species of orchids grow on the island, most of them are Italian orchids, yellow bee-orchid, Violet Limodore, and autumn lady's-tresses. Due to the interesting shape of its flower, the Italian orchid (*Orchis italica*) is also popularly called the "naked man".



Mediterranean herbs

Some types of medicinal Mediterranean herbs that can be found on the island are: sage, common heather, Dalmatian pellitory, and many others. Wild edible herbs require perfect environmental conditions. They grow in direct coexistence with humans, on all partially cultivated surfaces. However, they can also be found in fields, as well as in completely uncultivated areas. They have beneficial effects on human health because they are not contaminated with pesticides and other toxins. It retained only the best of what nature has to offer.



Underwater biodiversity

The waters of the Mljet National Park are rich in flora and fauna. The Great and Small Lake are home to harmless jellyfish *Aurelia relictta* that cannot be seen anywhere else in the world. The largest colony of *Cladocora caespitosa* stone coral in the Mediterranean is also located at the entrance to the Great Lake, where it has grown to today's proportions due to the intense sea currents caused by tides. Some of the largest specimens of Mediterranean scallops (*Pecten jakobaeus*) have been found in the Great Lake. More than 60 species of corals (red coral, black coral), many of which are endemic, and almost 120 species of fish can also be found in the park seabed. It also features large areas of seagrass meadows (*Posidonia oceanica*), which is a Natura 2000 habitat of special interest to the EU.

2.1 Geomorphological phenomena 2.2 Geomorphological phenomena 2.3 Geomorphological phenomena 2.4 Geomorphological phenomena



Great and Small Lake

The phenomenon of Mljet lakes is actually a deep-sea bay that was formed by the gradual immersion of three karst valleys after the latest ice age, ten thousand years ago. The lakes are a unique geological, oceanographic and geomorphological karst phenomenon. The Small Lake has an area of 24 ha and a depth of 29 m, and there are two pits, one of which ends at the depth of 38 m and the other at 50 m. The Great Lake has an area of 145 ha and a depth of 46 m, and it features the Islet of St Mary. With an increase of the sea level after the ice age, the valleys were filled with the sea and connected with the open sea through the Solin channel. At the time of changing tides, lakes intensively “communicate” with the open sea, and it is interesting that the direction of the sea currents changes approximately every six hours.



Jama (Odysseus Cave)

This site, originally called Jama, which is one of the most visited attractions on the island, has been more and more often called the Odysseus Cave since the mid-1970s due to tourism. This has now also become its most common name outside the local community. The name originates in one of the best-known island legends, according to which the famous hero Odysseus reached Mljet during his travels and was a prisoner of the nymph Calypso. Odysseus Cave is egg-shaped, a few tens of metres in diameter. It has a collapsed vault after which it was named Jama (Pit), because it looks like a big hole in the ground when looking from the land side. Through the limestone layers which separate it from the open sea, a tunnel-shaped opening has been formed, so the cave can be entered by swimming or in a small boat.



Sandy beaches

Mljet boasts beautiful beaches and crystal-clear sea. The best-known among them is the Saplnara bay, which features two sandy beaches, Velika and Mala Saplnara – favourite places for summer enjoyment. According to legends, Odysseus himself found refuge on the sands of Saplnara, and St Paul was shipwrecked in its immediate vicinity. The third sandy beach is located in the Blaca bay (also called Limuni), on the southeast part of the island of Mljet, and is 20 minutes away from Saplnara by foot. It is almost a kilometre long, facing the open sea and protected by low rocks. Saplnara beaches and Blaca bay can be viewed as symbols of preserved nature because we can even see sand dunes on them.



Blatine (or slatine)

Blatina (mud lake) is a karst depression filled with brackish water, i.e. salt water of lower salinity than sea water, formed by mixing the sea with running water or rainwater. In winter they look like actual small lakes, while in summer their water level drops significantly and their bottom finally remains mostly covered in mud (blato), giving them their name. There are three blatinas on Mljet: near Blato, Sobra, and Prožura, and one slatina near Kozarice. Slatina near Kozarica is meliorated and used for growing citrus and vegetables. Blatina is used for irrigating the fields and as a source of water in the summer months. The brackish water and the presence of eels in these bodies of water are proof that they are directly connected to the sea through a complex system of cracks and channels in the karst underground.

2.5 Geomorphological phenomena 2.6 Geomorphological phenomena 2.7 Geomorphological phenomena 2.8 Geomorphological phenomena



Sea currents

Strong sea currents that change every 6 hours depending on the tides are an additional phenomenon in the lakes on Mljet. The sea current (“Kurenat”) is most visible on the Great and Small Bridge. The strength of the sea current was also used by the Benedictines, who built a mill near today’s Great Bridge, which was powered by electricity and used to grind grain.



Islands, islets, and reefs

The island of Mljet, and especially the area of the National Park, is characterised by numerous capes, bays, islets, and cliffs. Ranked by indentation, Mljet takes the fourth place among big Croatian islands. Some of the larger islets in the Park are Pomeštak, Kobrava, Moračnik, and Glavat.



Rocks and cliffs

One feature of the Mljet National Park is its unique panoramic view of indented shores, cliffs, rocks, and numerous islets and rich orthography of the surrounding hills that rise steeply above the sea level, obscuring numerous karst fields and ancient stone settlements.



Islet of Saint Mary

Even before the arrival of the Benedictines in 1151, the Islet of Saint Mary was certainly a holy place for past cultures. The combination – island in the sea (Mljet), “sea” in the island (salt lakes), a smaller island in the “sea” within the island (Islet of Saint Mary) – is a unique natural phenomenon that will hardly leave anyone indifferent.

3.1 Historical heritage**Duke's Palace**

During the time of the Republic of Dubrovnik, the dukes of Mljet did not reside permanently on the island until 1554, when the Duke's Palace (Palac) was built in Babino Polje.

At the time, Babino Polje was the central place on the island, where the duke and the island university sat. Now the ethno collection "Bishop" is located in the former Duke's Palace.

3.2 Historical heritage**Sotnica**

The space of sotnica is a judicial-administrative and commercial building that owes its name to its location below Babino Polje (soto – below, under).

Sotnica was built by the Benedictines in order to store the yields from their estates in Babino Polje, and they exercised judicial power in it until the island was ruled by the Republic of Dubrovnik.

During the Benedictine rule, the books of the Mljet office were kept in it (the so-called Mljet chancellor recorded notarial documents, wills, various contracts, lawsuits, and complaints of Mljet locals in the notarial books *Diverse*, *Vendite*, *Testamenti*, and *Lamente*). The balcony of the Sotnica building features a tombstone with the longest known medieval inscription on Mljet.

3.3 Historical heritage**Roman Palace Complex in Polače**

The remains of the ruling palace from the 4th-5th century are located along the coast in the village of Polače, which was named after the palace. The palace is the central part of a large complex that used to include a spa, storage space, a fortress – a lookout point, two early Christian basilicas, and a dock for ships. This monumental building consisted of a large central hall of the basilica type ending in a polygonal apse, with two rooms on each side.

The entrance was a lobby with a recessed facade articulated by three doors, flanked by two polygonal towers. The Roman Palace in Polače is also the third largest Roman building in Croatia, following the Amphitheatre in Pula and Diocletian's Palace in Split.

3.4 Historical heritage**Early Christian basilicas**

As the bay in Polače was a safe port, it is assumed that Roman galleys wintered in it, which is why so many church buildings were necessary. It is believed that there were three early Christian basilicas that were most likely built next to the summer house in the 5th-6th century. Two early Christian basilicas have been partially preserved – the eastern and the western. The basilica that has been preserved the most is rectangular in shape, facing south, with an extended apse in the shape of the letter "T" (similar to Solin's three-nave early Christian churches). It is built of rough-hewn stone. Arched windows with a cross shape in the middle are still visible on the back wall (the same as the Church of St Donatus in Zadar).

3.5 Historical heritage**Goveđari**

As the area of today's National Park was ruled by the Benedictines, a decision made in 1793 concluded a settlement agreement that allowed settlement and work, and established levies to be given to the Benedictines. Goveđari is the only place in the National Park that is not on the coast, and it is characterised by the amphitheatre position of residential buildings. The Church of St Nicholas is located in a pine forest at the end of the village, halfway to the settlement of Babine Kuće. It was built at the beginning of 1927 with a parish office on Velika Loza, at the edge of Pomijenta and Vrbovica.

3.6 Historical heritage**Maranovići**

Maranovići is one of the oldest settlements on the island of Mljet. It was named after Ratko Maranović, a landowner. The rich Maransko field and large spacious olive groves contributed to the development of this place, which once had its own parish and judges. The Parish Church of St Anthony was built on the location of the old Gothic Church of St Anthony, which is mentioned along with the fraternity in Maranovići at the beginning of the 17th century.

3.7 Historical heritage**Korita**

Korita was built in the 15th century after the migration from Žara and after the devastation of Okuklje. It was named after the natural stone depressions into which water was filled (korita – riverbeds).

Due to its geographical position, the waters of the Mljet Channel and the open sea were supervised from Korita.

3.8 Historical heritage**Prožura**

Prožura is a settlement from the 15th century, built around the Dubrovnik Gothic Church of the Holy Trinity and the monastery. The probable builders and founders were the Lokrum Benedictines in 1477. The most valuable item at this location is the Romanesque bronze and rustic-Gothic crucifix. The settlement served as a holiday location for the nobility of the Republic of Dubrovnik. The Church of St Martin with a porch dominates the village, and the church of St Rocco with a semi-circular apse from a younger age gives an additional overall impression of an important and beautiful place. Kaštio (square fortress) from the 17th century testifies to the difficult times and the traffic and strategic importance of the island throughout history.

3.9 Historical heritage 3.10**Small Bridge**

The Small Bridge is a stone bridge that links the narrow and shallow channel connecting the two lakes, under which only really small vessels (such as kayaks and canoes) can pass. The area of the Small Bridge is a popular gathering place for visitors and a swimming area. It is especially interesting because of the sea current that changes direction every 6 hours, characteristic of the lakes on Mljet.

**Great Bridge**

The Great Bridge links the wider and deeper channel that connects the lakes with the Solin Channel and the open sea. The bridge was demolished in 1958 due to the needs of the regime at the time, and the channel was further expanded, which affected the intensification of currents. In 2016, a bridge of much larger dimensions and a different appearance was built once again, enabling unobstructed tours of the lake.

3.11 Historical heritage 3.12**Polače**

Due to the excellent position that today's Polače have due to the bay that was a safe port for ships and its own source of drinking water, this area has been inhabited since the first centuries of the new era. Of the monuments from that time, we must mention the Roman Palace, after which the settlement was named, and the two early Christian basilicas. Polače was continuously inhabited until the 11th century, when the island came into the ownership of the Benedictines of the Pulse Order, who forbade inhabiting of the area under their administration. After seven centuries of stagnation, Polače began to develop once again in the 19th century, when the Nodilo and Dabelić families moved from Babino Polje around 1830.

3.12 Historical heritage**Babino Polje**

The most populated place on the island, located in the centre of Mljet. Babino Polje is one of the oldest settlements on the island, dating back to the 7th and 8th century. As the duke ruled this place during the Republic of Dubrovnik, as evidenced by the Duke's Palace, Babino Polje had great historical significance for Mljet. Along with the Duke's Palace, the landmarks of Babino Polje include Sotnica, numerous churches, such as the one of St Blaise, Holy Salvation, St Paul, and the remains of the Church of St Pancracy. The famous Jama (Odysseus Cave) is also located near the settlement.

4.1 Stories and legends 4.2 Stories and legends 4.3 Stories and legends 4.4 Stories and legends**Legend of Odysseus**

The best-known island legend originates from the Greek period and tells the story that the famous hero Odysseus reached Mljet during his travels. After the terrible shipwreck in which he was the only survivor, Odysseus ended up on the island of Ogygia, which Mljet locals identify with the island of Mljet according to the descriptions (olive groves right along the coast). Odysseus spent 7 years on Ogygia, enchanted by the nymph Calypso, the daughter of god Atlas. She kept him captive in a cave, until releasing him on Zeus' orders. It is believed that this is now the Odysseus Cave because the Ogiran rock, which has often posed a danger to sailors throughout history, is located not far from it.

**Legend of Agesilaus**

This legend tells a story of the beauty of Mljet, which is most evident in the area of the lakes. According to the legend, the Roman emperor Septimius Severus banished Agesilaus from the court of Anaxarba in Cilicia, so he took refuge on Mljet with his son, the poet Opian. As the story goes, he had today's Roman palace built on Mljet, modelled by Roman hamlets. He received his pardon from the Emperor Caracalla after the poet composed inspired verses about the beauty of the sea and fishing in his two didactic epics Kuvnyetika and Alieutika. However, Opian and his father refused to return to Rome, justifying their decision by stating that they would never change their small empire for a big one, sending the emperor a branch of an Aleppo pine with a bird's nest with a shell, saying they have found paradise on earth.

**Legend of the origin of Babino Polje**

Many legends are associated with the origin of the name of this settlement. One of them says that the settlement was named after the nymph Calypso, known as Odysseus' mistress. It is believed that the nymph lived to a very old age on Mljet, and that stories were told of her as an old woman (baba) who owned the entire island. Another legend tells a story of an old woman who heard two military leaders arguing over the area of current Babino Polje and poisoned a source of drinking water and thus saved the settlement. As a token of gratitude, according to the story, the locals called the place Babino Polje (Old Woman's Field).

**St Paul the Apostle Shipwrecked**

As described in the Acts of the Apostles in the Bible, on his journey from Jerusalem to Rome, St Paul experienced a terrible storm on the Adriatic, which nearly drowned them. According to the legend, while escaping from the great storm and shipwreck, the shipwrecked men drifted on a small cliff in the open sea, on the southeast coast of the island of Mljet. There are two islands in the Mediterranean that, according to ancient chronicles, were called Melita or Malta – current Mljet and Malta. However, Mljet has always been full of snakes, and there have never been any on Malta, so this is one of the most reliable proofs that St Paul was staying on Mljet and not on Malta.

5.1 Tradition 5.2



Olive growing

Mljet has always had a tradition of olive growing, as evidenced by numerous legends. The Park area used to be home to more than 12,000 olive trees, while around 4,000 are cultivated today. The Mljet National Park provides incentives to the local population for the restoration and maintenance of olive groves every year.



Guvno (or gumno or arman)

Guvno is a cultural and historical site, initially built for the purpose of threshing grain and beans. The location of the site is conditioned by the constant movement of air needed to separate the grain from the chaff. On Mljet, grain was threshed by hand on a threshing floor (guvno), while in some other parts it was also threshed by cattle (horses, oxen, mules, etc.), which can be tied to a pole in the middle of the threshing floor. In some places threshing floors were used both as places for social gatherings and for dancing.

5.3 Tradition 5.4



Viticulture

The following wine grape varieties have mostly been grown on Mljet:

- red varieties: plavka, mrkuša, crna bratkovina (lovorika),
- white varieties: rukatac, kuljenača, zlatarica, grk, kuč, pošip, bunda, bijela bratkovina (bijela lovorika).

DNA analysis has established that kuljenača and mrkuša are autochthonous varieties that thrive only on Mljet. Based on the conducted tests, these are varieties with very good characteristics and wines made from these varieties are expected to be recognised and in high demand soon.



Animal husbandry

Mljet families mostly had one or two donkeys, ten to twenty sheep, up to a dozen goats, one or two pigs, and some chickens. From the beginning to the middle of the twentieth century, some families had flocks of sheep and/or goats with more than a hundred head.

5.5 Tradicija



Costume and folklore

Mljet folk costumes were made mainly of wool and some silk. The decorative parts were dominated by red, yellow, and green. Widows' clothing was all black, and only the shirt was white. Women's costumes have been preserved and only slightly modified for, while men's costumes have been changed considerably throughout the 19th century because men were more likely to spend time away from Mljet (seafaring, wars, overseas countries) and purchase more modern clothing. Traditional Mljet dances are: Poskočica and Škampa Boško, which were danced to the ljerica instrument. In addition to traditional Mljet songs, songs from the mainland also appeared at the end of the 19th century, primarily from the rest of Dalmatia and Herzegovina.

