



Highlights of your Skadar Lake Boat Tour

Your guidebook from Rijeka Crnojevića

Welcome to one of the most fabulous areas of Europe.

Welcome to Skadar Lake National Park!

Exclusive to our tours. This guidebook was created for guests of Savina Luka Boat Tours from Rijeka Crnojevića. [Visit us online.](#)

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Good to know

Start and end: all tours start and end in Rijeka Crnojevića, unless booked otherwise.

Your safety comes first: the contents of each tour depend on the water level and on the captain's safety decisions, especially when the weather demands it. Your captain always takes care of you. For safety reasons, please follow the captain's instructions at all times.

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Which tour did I book?

Everyone starts the same. At Highlight 5 the **Canyon Tour** turns back. Follow your colour:

Canyon

Highlights **1 → 5**, then back to Rijeka Crnojevića.

[Canyon of River Crnojevića ›](#)

Classic Amazon

Highlights **1 → 8**, then **9 → 12** (Amazon channel), then back.

[Amazon Classic Tour ›](#)

Amazon Safari

Highlights **1 → 8**, then **13 → 15**, then the Amazon channel **9 → 12**, then back.

[Amazon Boat Safari Tour ›](#)

Complete Lake

Highlights **1 → 8**, then **13, 14, 16 → 25**, then the Amazon channel **9 → 12**, then back.

[The Complete Skadar Lake Adventure ›](#)

1 Into the River of Crnojević

Canyon

Classic Amazon

Amazon Safari

Complete Lake

We enter **Rijeka Crnojevića**, the “river of the Crnojević”: the river of the dynasty that ruled Zeta, the medieval predecessor of Montenegro. It is one of the three rivers that feed Skadar Lake.

The Crnojević family rose to power in the 15th century. Ivan Crnojević built the fortified town of Obod here, and in the 1490s a printing house produced the first books of the South Slavs.

Right opposite our restaurant **Savina Luka** you can see the house of **King Nikola** (Nicholas I of Montenegro, 1841–1921). He became prince in 1860 and king in 1910, and was a well-known figure in 19th-century European politics. His daughters married into several European royal families, which earned him the nickname “father-in-law of Europe”.

Learn more:

[The Crnojević dynasty \(Wikipedia\)](#)

[King Nikola \(Nicholas I\) \(Wikipedia\)](#)

[Rijeka Crnojevića \(Wikipedia\)](#)

2 The checkpoint and the old harbour

Canyon

Classic Amazon

Amazon Safari

Complete Lake

We pass the **National Park checkpoint**, where you receive your National Park ticket.

This is the area of the old harbour of Rijeka Crnojevića. On the banks you can still see the **remains of old ships**. For a long time this small town was a busy river port for goods travelling between the lake and the mountains.

Learn more:

[The Rijeka Crnojevića river \(Wikipedia\)](#)

3

Dujeva above the canyon

Canyon

Classic Amazon

Amazon Safari

Complete Lake

Next in the canyon comes **Dujeva**. Look up to the **right-hand side**: it sits high on top of the canyon wall. Ask your captain to point out exactly where to look.



Below Dujeva

4

Pavlova Strana, the famous horseshoe bend

Canyon

Classic Amazon

Amazon Safari

Complete Lake

We now enter the slopes around the famous **Pavlova Strana** horseshoe bend. Do you know what “Pavlova Strana” means? Literally it is “Pavle's Side”: a steep hillside above the river's most photographed curve.

Fun fact: “pavlova” is also a delicious cake-like dessert! A crisp meringue shell with a soft, marshmallow-like centre, topped with whipped cream and fresh fruit, and named after the Russian ballerina Anna Pavlova. Our Pavlova Strana is a different treat, but the view is just as sweet.

Who the original Pavle was is not reliably documented, and there are several local stories. What is certain is the view: the river carves an almost perfect green horseshoe through the hills before it reaches the lake. Many people know it from photos long before they visit.

From the water you see the bend from below. For the postcard view from above, ask us about the viewpoint on the road between Podgorica and Cetinje.



Pavlova Strana from above

Learn more:

[The Rijeka Crnojevića river and its meanders \(Wikipedia\)](#)

[Pavlova, the desert \(Wikipedia\)](#)

5

The end of the canyon

Canyon

Classic Amazon

Amazon Safari

Complete Lake

Now we slowly reach the end of the canyon. This is the **turning point of the Canyon Tour**: Canyon Tour guests head back to Rijeka Crnojevića from here. All other tours continue.

How the canyon was formed: over thousands of years the river cut its way through the limestone hills on its way to the lake. The result is a winding, steep-sided gorge that suddenly opens into the wide lake basin.

Water level through the year: the lake rises and falls dramatically. In autumn and winter heavy rain and the rivers feeding the lake (the Morača, the Rijeka Crnojevića and others) raise the level and flood large areas of shoreline. In summer it drops again, because less water flows in and the lake's only outflow, the Bojana river, carries water away to the Adriatic. This is why tours can differ from season to season.

Plants and animals: water lilies, reeds and willow-lined shores, fish that include the endemic Skadar bleak, and more than 270 bird species.

Learn more:

[Lake Skadar \(Wikipedia\)](#)

Canyon Tour guests: this is your turning point. Enjoy the ride back to Rijeka Crnojevića. **Everyone else:** keep reading, we continue.

6

Prevlaka, Dodoši and Karuč

Classic Amazon

Amazon Safari

Complete Lake

As the canyon widens, the left side shows **Prevlaka, Dodoši and Karuč**. These villages share one thing: they sit at the end of the world, at the end of long dead-end roads, and it feels like pure relaxation.

Roads here wind for a long time, which is why boats are often the easier way to travel.



Karuč on the lake shore

7

A winter paradise for birds

Classic Amazon

Amazon Safari

Complete Lake

This is where large numbers of waterbirds arrive for the winter. Skadar Lake is regarded as one of the most important wintering grounds for waterbirds in Southern Europe, and counts of well over 100,000 birds are reported in some winters. Many of them come from northern and eastern Europe, fleeing the cold. Altogether more than 270 species have been recorded on and around the lake.



Cormorants on Skadar Lake



A grey heron among the cormorants

Learn more:

[Lake Skadar and its birds \(Wikipedia\)](#)

8 Pelicans

Classic Amazon

Amazon Safari

Complete Lake

The **Dalmatian pelican** is the star of Skadar Lake. With a wingspan of up to about three metres, it is one of the largest flying birds in Europe, and the lake is one of the few places where it breeds. In this area pelicans can be seen frequently.

The biggest group we ever saw and filmed here was **21 pelicans at once**.



A Dalmatian pelican on the lake



Dalmatian pelican, close up

Learn more:

[Dalmatian pelican \(Wikipedia\)](#)

The tours split here.

Classic Amazon: turn left, continue with Highlight 9.

Amazon Safari and **Complete Lake:** go straight on, jump to Highlight 13. You will reach the Amazon channel (9–12) later.

The Amazon channel

Hidden waterways, water lilies and reeds that look like a real jungle. **Classic Amazon** guests experience this now. **Amazon Safari** and **Complete Lake** guests experience it at the end of their route.



Wild and quiet



Water lilies in the channel

9

Into the Amazon: two channels

Classic Amazon

Amazon Safari

Complete Lake

The classic Amazon tour turns **left** into the channel towards **Karuč**. On the right-hand side is a wide dry-and-wet land area full of reeds.

We follow the first part of the Amazon channel for about **400 metres**, then turn **right** into the second Amazon channel towards Dodoši. The water is very shallow here, sometimes below 40 cm. Watch for crocodiles waiting in the reeds. Don't worry, none live

here, but in this jungle scenery you may half expect them!

This route is actively used to transport goods, because the road to Dodoši is long and winding, and going by boat is often easier.



Into the Amazon channel

10 Dodoši, Žabljak fortress and Biševina

Classic Amazon

Amazon Safari

Complete Lake

Tip 1: Dodoši. Charming, with a scenic restaurant at the river that is perfect for kids because of the shallow water. A stunning new campsite opened in 2025. It is only open in summer, because the whole area between Dodoši and Žabljak Crnojevića is flooded when the rains come.

Tip 2: Žabljak Crnojevića fortress. It is great, and hardly any tourist ever goes there, but you miss a

360° view over the lake area if you skip it. For a short time in the 15th century it was the capital of the Crnojević rulers of Zeta, before the Ottomans took it in 1478.

Tip 3: restaurant Biševina. If you want to enjoy Montenegro like a local, go there, eat and sit with your feet in the river water. The setting is simple, with basic benches and sanitary facilities that match the nature around, but it has the highest rating we have ever seen: **4.9**. We say: go.



On the way to Dodoši



Dodoši: a swim in the river



Žabljak Crnojevića fortress on its hill



The fortress walls from below



From the fortress: the river and the village



The second lake, "Malo Jezero"



Biševina from above



Lunch at Biševina, with the swimming area in view

Learn more:

[Žabljak Crnojevića fortress \(Wikipedia\)](#)

[Restaurant Biševina on Google Maps](#)

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The Amazon main path

Classic Amazon

Amazon Safari

Complete Lake

We continue by crossing **left** into the Amazon main path. No words needed here. You will see what we mean.

*A green tunnel**Mirror-calm water***12**

Karuč: swim spot and the way back

Classic Amazon

Amazon Safari

Complete Lake

After you wake up from the hypnosis of the Amazon magic, we come back onto the main channel, to the right-hand side towards **Karuč**. This is a **perfect swimming spot**.

Turning left, we slowly return to where we entered the Amazon, and now see **Prevlaka from the other side**. Watch out for the places you saw earlier, now from a new angle.



At the end of the Amazon channel



A swim at Karuč



A swim stop on the lake

Classic Amazon: this is the end of your route. We head back to Rijeka Crnojevića.

Amazon Safari and **Complete Lake:** the Amazon channel is the end of your route too. Now we head back to the harbour.

Out onto the lake

Amazon Safari and **Complete Lake** guests: we go straight on.

13 The Sophia Loren Hills

Amazon Safari

Complete Lake

Far in the distance you can now see the **Sophia Loren Hills**. The story goes that **Sophia Loren's husband** once looked at the hills and said: "Yeah, this is like my Sophia."



A picnic with a view to the Sophia Loren Hills, from Kom Monastery

Learn more:

[About the actress Sophia Loren \(Wikipedia\)](#)

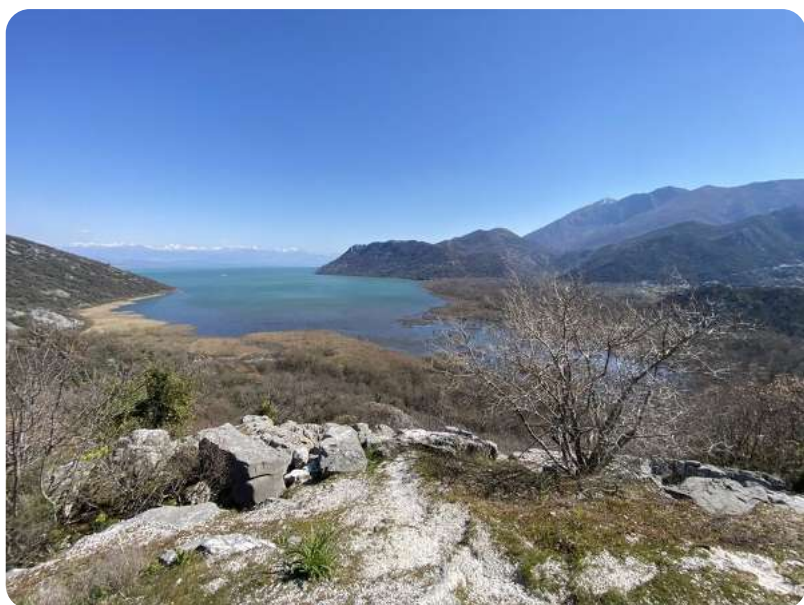
14 Poseljani and the start of the lake

[Amazon Safari](#)[Complete Lake](#)

Soon you will see the **swimmer marking the official start of Skadar Lake**. On the right-hand side lies **Poseljani**, a nearly abandoned village with a long history of big water mills, and waterfalls in the surrounding area.

Want to see Poseljani up close? Come back another day: the **4-hour private Poseljani waterfalls and birdwatching tour** from Virpazar by Noah's Ark Skadar Lake Boat Tours takes you there. The tours from Virpazar are especially known for their **beautiful traditional wooden boats**.

Virpazar is also the place to **rent e-bikes**, perfect for exploring the area around the lake.



Poseljani from above



The view over Poseljani



Wooden boats in the harbour of Virpazar



Local snacks on the tours from Virpazar

Learn more:

[Poseljani waterfalls and birdwatching tour](#)

[E-bike rental in Virpazar](#)

[Lake Skadar \(Wikipedia\)](#)

15 The island nature reserves

Amazon Safari

We go around one of the islands on the left-hand side. The islands here are free of people: pure nature reserves.

The Amazon Safari now enters a **small channel** and continues into the Amazon area.



Sunset on Skadar Lake

Amazon Safari: continue with **Highlight 9** (the Amazon channel), then back to Rijeka Crnojevića.

Complete Lake: stay on the main lake, continue with Highlight 16.

The Complete Lake Tour

Complete Lake guests: the lake's classics await.

16 Kom Monastery, a hidden gem

Complete Lake

Depending on the arrangement with your captain, the complete lake tour continues to **Kom Monastery**. It sits on one of the islands like a throne and is a true hidden gem of Skadar Lake, with some of the best views on the lake, and not only to the Sophia Loren Hills.

Please note: Kom Monastery has introduced an extra entrance fee of **€5**, to be paid additionally, for its urgently needed renovation.



Kom Monastery from above



Entrance of Kom Monastery



Inside the church

Learn more:

[Kom Monastery \(Wikipedia\)](#)

17 Under the bridge: Lesendro Fortress

Complete Lake

We continue to the big railway and road bridge that spans the lake from **Virpazar** to **Vranjina**. To the left of the bridge you see **Lesendro Fortress**, an important bulwark against the Ottoman Empire, fortified under Petar II Petrović-Njegoš. The Ottomans took it in 1843, and it came back to Montenegro in 1878.

Sadly there is no proper path to it, so visiting means crossing one of the busiest roads in Montenegro. But it is a proud monument of those times, and best admired from the water.



The view from Lesendro Fortress over the lake and the Morača

Learn more:

[Lesendro \(Wikipedia\)](#)

[Virpazar \(Wikipedia\)](#)

[Vranjina \(Wikipedia\)](#)

18 Into the Morača river

Complete Lake

We cross into the **Morača**, the largest river feeding Skadar Lake. It brings icy-cold mountain water from the mountains around **Kolašin** and flows about 100 kilometres through Montenegro before it reaches the lake.



The Morača canyon near Podgorica. Photo: Diego Delso, [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)

Learn more:

[Morača river \(Wikipedia\)](#)

[Kolašin \(Wikipedia\)](#)

19

A different lake: the Sophia Loren Hills are an island

Complete Lake

We follow the Morača and turn **right** into its second arm. Now you can see that the Sophia Loren Hills are an island! This area feels completely different from the rest of the lake, with many floating restaurants and weekend houses.

It is the part closest to **Podgorica**, a capital known for roasting its residents in summer. So everyone flees the city and comes here to cool off.

Learn more:

[Podgorica \(Wikipedia\)](#)

20

Vranjina Monastery

Complete Lake

A few kilometres later you see **Vranjina Monastery**, one of the oldest monasteries of Skadar Lake. If time and conditions allow, we may stop and walk up for the views and the ancient church.



Vranjina Monastery from above



A wooden boat at the Vranjina swim stop

Learn more:

[Vranjina \(Wikipedia\)](#)

21

Albania, Skodra and the Accursed Mountains

Complete Lake

Soon the left-hand side shows the border land with **Albania**, and behind it the **Prokletije mountains** (the Accursed Mountains), among the highest areas on this side of the Balkans. In the distance lies **Skodra** (Shkodër), which gave the lake its name. Or the Montenegrins might say it is the other way round. Let's leave that discussion to the historians.

Either way, this is where Europe and the **Ottoman Empire** met, a very historic area.

Learn more:

[Shkodër \(Skodra\) \(Wikipedia\)](#)

[Prokletije / Accursed Mountains \(Wikipedia\)](#)

[Ottoman Empire \(Wikipedia\)](#)

22

The National Park Museum

Complete Lake

Next comes the **Skadar Lake National Park Museum**, included in your ticket. It is a small display of four rooms about all of Montenegro's national parks, and well worth 15 minutes.



The Skadar Lake room of the National Park Museum



Pelican and cormorant



Historic photos of life on the lake



Montenegro's other national parks, here Durmitor

Learn more:

[Skadar Lake and its National Park \(Wikipedia\)](#)

23 Virpazar

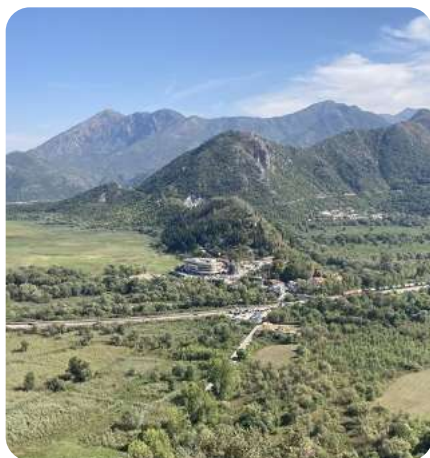
Complete Lake

Straight ahead you see **Virpazar**. It is a small place, and its position on the coastal road to Podgorica makes it the starting point of most boat tours on the lake.

Good for you that you started in Rijeka Crnojevića: you see so much more on your tour.



The harbour of Virpazar



Virpazar from above

Learn more:

[Virpazar \(Wikipedia\)](#)

24

The open lake and the cryptodepression

Complete Lake

On the left-hand side lies the “open” lake, stretching away to the south-east. There is not much to see on the water there, but it is lovely to explore by e-bike or by car on a scenic route.

Cryptodepression: this is a lake basin whose bottom lies **below sea level**, even though the water surface itself is a few metres above it. Skadar Lake is one of these. Deep springs, locally called “eyes”, push up cold water from far below, and the lake drains to the Adriatic through the **Bojana river**, which reaches the sea at **Ada Bojana**.

Learn more:

[Cryptodepression \(Wikipedia\)](#)

[Ada Bojana \(Wikipedia\)](#)

25 Back through the water lilies

Complete Lake

Now we cross to the right-hand side, pass under the bridge, and glide through several **fields of water lilies** towards the Amazon route.



A field of water lilies



Water lily in bloom



A lily up close



A water lily, picked on board

Complete Lake: continue with **Highlight 9** (the Amazon channel), then we return to Rijeka Crnojevića.

Thank you!

This is the moment to thank you for becoming part of our home area, **Skadar Lake National Park**.

There is so much more to see. Come back again and we will show you Poseljani, the second, unknown lake, the waterfalls, and Žabljak Crnojevića.



Happy guests on board

Did you enjoy your tour?

Please give us a review!



We are grateful for your review. It takes less than a minute, and it helps other travellers find us.
Thank you!



Scan or tap the QR code to review us.

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Questions or bookings?

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Savina & luka

Our restaurant Savina Luka, right on the river

Hungry after your trip?

After (or before) your expedition you are warmly invited to our well-known, highly rated Montenegrin restaurant **Savina Luka**. We serve typical local specialities, including the world-famous **Skadar Lake carp**.

Find Savina Luka on Google Maps