

BALKAN HIGHLIGHTS

Biking – Hiking – Rafting – Cruising
– Food & Wine Experience

12 days Adventure



Season

March – November



Arrival

Belgrade



Accomm.

4*/5* hotels



Group Size

Small Group



Activity Level

Relaxed



Departure

Podgorica



Meals

16 Meals Included



4 UNESCO Sites





Highlights

Take a deep breath on flourishing Zlatibor, the beautiful air spa mountain

Walk across the bridge over the Drina, described by Nobel Prize winning writer Ivo Andrić

Find out why Sarajevo is known as "Little Jerusalem"

Feel the adrenalin rush on your Zip Line adventure, 170m above the Tara River Canyon



Introduction:

As much as you think that you already know all about it, Europe still has aces to get you! The Balkans for sure is one of those, with its wondrous nature, cultural immersion, lavish and illustrious heritage, cordial and generous hospitality. A visit to the heart of the Balkans shows why it is seen as a "crossroad" of Southeast and Central Europe, and leaves long lasting emotional echo that will warmly call for you to return for more.

Three countries on this remarkable journey filled with true wilderness, lovely people and life-changing adventures, will show you all faces of the region.

So let us to introduce you undiscovered Serbia, epic Montenegro and real Bosnia!

If you are arriving in **Belgrade** a few days prior to the tour departure, you can book additional nights with us, at the same hotel.

Arrival transfer from the listed airport is included. Private transfers from non-listed airports **are available on request**.

Please check the options with your local expert.

Day 1 Arrive Belgrade

Belgrade, the Serbian capital, one of the oldest European cities, adventurous and proud as it is, will welcome you with an open heart and show you its incredible historical and cultural wealth, vibrant night life and flavorful cuisine. Built where the Danube and Sava Rivers meet, Belgrade is a city of so many layers, and each one you discover will tickle your brain and hug your heart. Our guide on transfer will introduce you to it and give you all the essential instructions for the first day. **Overnight: Belgrade**



Day 2 Taste & Bike Belgrade Experience Tour



18 km



4 h



65 m

You can never really get to know Serbian culture and soul until you live through its local routine. That's why combined Taste & Bike Belgrade Experience® tour starts off with a daily ritual - a morning coffee at the oldest but really trendy Belgrade quarter, Dorćol. A decent dose of caffeine will push you up further through the day. Your next stop is at an old family bakery, a holy place for Serbs, and with some fresh bread in the bag, you will explore one of the oldest green markets in Belgrade, Bajloni. The entire place is covered with the scent of rural Serbia, so you can almost see the villages, cattle and gardens where vegetables and fruits are grown. The first, walking part of the tour will also take you to the traditional, old school (with machines, décor and ambiance untouched since the 80's) pastry shop too, where sweets will reveal the rich Balkan heritage to you: a



Serbian foundation with Oriental and European touch. After a tasty morning, it's time to burn some calories on a bike! Hop on your bikes by the Sava River and cycle towards New Belgrade and Zemun, different faces of Serbian capital. Crossing the River Sava over Branko's Bridge, you will reach New Belgrade. Feel its energy while you bike along the wide boulevards and blocks, between skyscrapers and company headquarters! The Palace of Serbia, on its wide, flat plateau, stands out between the building blocks as a great symbol of communist architecture. Pleasant ride is going to take you to the bohemian Zemun set on the bank of Danube with marvellous fish restaurants. From Millennial tower you will feel the echo of Central Europe and get why Zemun is the city in the city (Belgrade). Refreshing breeze, the view of the Great War Island and the confluence of the rivers Sava and Danube are highlights of the ride along the quay on our way back.
Overnight: Belgrade.



Day 3

Northern Serbia Highlights: NP Fruška Gora hiking – S. Karlovci with wine tasting – City of Novi Sad

 8,4 km  2:15 h  300 m  195 m

Heading to the North, you will realize that Fruška Gora Mountain is the only thing that spoils the simple, colourful plain of Vojvodina region. There, you will visit Novo Hopovo monastery, one of the 17 religious gems of the Serbian Orthodox Church hidden in the mountain. Built in the 15th century, this stone and brick monastery was the most important enlightenment centre in Serbia once: famous cultural and philological figure Dositej Obradović lived and worked here.

More dynamic part of the tour is about to follow. The two-and-a-half-hour-hike with couple awesome viewpoints gives full impression about idyllic Fruška Gora. We move on to Sremski Karlovci which with the Patriarchy Palace, St. Nicholas church and the first Serbian modern gymnasium established in 1791 is justifying informal title - museum town. One of the best sides of Karlovci is probably the wine production, so here's the great occasion to visit a traditional winery and try a local sort of wine!

Vivid facades with a specific type of windows (kibic-fenster), one cannonball in a wall as a remainder, street musicians, and charming passages are a sign that you are in Novi Sad and its picturesque downtown. This 2022 European capital of culture, a city with true

multicultural ambience, offers a long list of important sights worthy of attention that will make you fall in love with it. **Overnight: Belgrade.**



Day 4

Vivid Western Serbia: Drina River – NP Tara Mountain hiking – Wooden Town – Zlatibor Mountain

 11 km  3 h  145 m

The following three days are saved for an exciting and unforgettable adventure in Western Serbia, the most vivid region in the country. You will spend this amazing time surrounded by stunning nature, delicious cuisine and friendly, hospitable people. The route leads along the gorgeous Drina River and an isolated and unique house made of logs on a river stone, House on the Drina. Don't miss your chance to take some lovely photos of this widely famous attraction.

After a ride through attractive landscapes with mind-blowing views, some walking will do you good. A hike to the astonishing viewpoint Banjska Stena at the Tara National Park rewards you with an exceptional panorama from the mighty cliffs over emerald Drina River, wide Perućac Lake and Eastern Bosnia. Short break for lunch will refresh you enough just before a visit to the enchanting ethno-village Drvengrad (Wooden Town), built by famous director Emir Kusturica. All the objects at this movielike setting are made of natural materials, mostly wood, hence the name. With head and soul full of impressions, you'll finish the day on



Zlatibor Mountain, the royal health resort in Serbia, officially established at the end of 19th century.
Overnight: Zlatibor Mountain.



Day 5

Zlatibor Mountain – Višegrad stop – Sarajevo Food Experience Walking tour®



It is time to discover the most precious gems of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Head West, towards the town of Višegrad – a small town with an immense importance throughout the centuries. It is known as a birth place of the Nobel prize winner, Ivo Andrić, who described it in one of his greatest novels. The UNESCO's Mehmed Paša Sokolović Bridge, on the Drina River, is the symbol of this town. Višegrad used to be the border between Eastern and Western Roman Empire, and today, it is an inevitable destination on the route throughout the Balkans. Its Andrić Town, designed and supported by the world famous director, Emir Kusturica, is a unique homage to one of the most significant writers of the region and the most important historical events of the town. Upon arrival to the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina, you will dive straight into Sarajevo Food Experience Walking tour® that will please both your mind and palate. With a concept of combining history and cuisine, the past will look more alive and the gastronomy will get a deeper meaning! Storytelling starts with eclectic Vijećnica (City Hall), originally dated from the end of the 19th century and reopened in 2014, and anecdotes about "Inat-house" (spite house) or Šehar-Čehaja Bridge. The very heart of the downtown, Baščaršija with authentic souqs and crafts shops from the Ottoman era, and the fascinating Gazi Husrev-bey mosque follows. Once distinctly multicultural Sarajevo today can be seen in traces: examples are the Museum of the



Jews, the Orthodox Church from the 16th century and Catholic cathedral of Sacred heart. Tour starts on a river and ends above it, on the most known bridge – Latin bridge, where the successor to the Austro-Hungarian throne Franz Ferdinand was shot, consequently causing the First World War.

Overnight: Sarajevo.

Day 6

Sarajevo Leisure day or Optional experiences: Lukomir Village Hiking Tour or The Essence of Herzegovina



Dive into Sarajevo by yourself or join us on optional tour. Among the highlights, quite number of places, significant for locals, and different food shops will bring you a chance to feel a true pulse of the city. The best examples are small, family-run gastro points with expertise in a unique traditional specialty. We highly recommend you not to miss Sarajevo brewery museum where along the great beer you can enjoy number of urban legends from its over 150-year long history.

OPTIONAL 1: Lukomir Village Hiking Tour.

The picturesque ride through Bjelašnica Olympic Mountain will take you to Umoljani village known by the UNESCO World Heritage site - Dolovo Stećci Medieval Tombstone Graveyards. Umoljani village is right where our hiking adventure begins, with a goal to reach Lukomir village, the highest and most isolated village in Bosnia and Herzegovina, located at 1.500 meters of altitude. On your way to Lukomir you will reach Gradina, a small settlement primarily used by the locals as a base (camp) for summer pastures. As hike continues upwards, spectacular panoramic view of Studeni potok (Cold Stream) and its valley spreads around. At the end of the three-hour-hike the reward is expecting you: conquering the peak Obalj (1.896 metres high). Once at the top, you will experience an extraordinary view of the peaks of the mountains Bjelašnica, Treskavica and Visočica, as well as the Rakitnica River Canyon and many faraway villages. After a short refreshment, your hike continues down to Lukomir, an exceptional village with a 600-year-long tradition, an unforgettable and one of a kind experience. Don't miss the great opportunity to learn about their own tradition, cooking methods, and clothing that have remained intact in this village from the medieval ages. A true treat will be meeting the locals and learning first-hand about the difficulty, but also simplicity of life in the mountains. Savour a traditionally prepared lunch and coffee (included), and take some fantastic photos of the medieval stone-made mountain houses.

After the lunch break, you will hike back through one of the least discovered canyons in Europe, the canyon of the Rakitnica River. As you hike through the canyon, 800 metres deep and, in some places, only 1 metre wide, you will be amazed by the rare sight of virgin nature in its full glory. The hiking route leads all the way to the starting point so the circle for this day is closed. With body and mind full of impressions, take a seat and relax on your way back to Sarajevo.

OPTIONAL 2: The Essence of Herzegovina.

After exploring Bosnia, it is time to get to know Herzegovina! The first stop is Blagaj (a site on the UNESCO Tentative List), an old town from the 15th century where the Kosač noble family ruled. The dervish's house in Blagaj is considered to be the crib of Islam of today's Bosnia and Herzegovina, settled in a fairy-tale scenery, beneath the cliffs, on the shores of the emerald green river Buna.

Later on, head to one of the most beautiful cities of the Balkan Peninsula, Mostar. The central point of the walking tour is the symbol of the city, Balkan TOP 10 and the most photographed sight in the country – the Old Bridge (a UNESCO protected landmark). Use your free time to blend in with the locals on the busy cobbled streets of old town, climb to the top of Koški Mehmed Pasha Mosque tower or simply enjoy a homemade coffee at its courtyard, check out the Crooked Bridge and the old tanner's quarter Tabhana. An absolute must is to taste traditional meals on the banks of the crystal clear Neretva River, with an amazing view of the bridge rising above. **Overnight: Sarajevo.**



Day 7

NP Sutjeska with Perućica Rainforest & Trnovačko Lake

 12,5 km  5 h  1276 m

One more day of flourishing gem of nature of Bosnia is ahead of you. National Park Sutjeska, located about 100 km away from Sarajevo, represents one of the oldest parks in Bosnia with an area of 175 km² comprised of magnificent, untouched and pristine wild nature. After a short walk, enter the park and rainforest Perućica, one of the two last standing rainforests in Europe, dating 11.000 years back. Fun fact: some parts of the forest are completely unattainable by foot, while some trees are 300 years old, with a height of over 50 metres. A true laboratory of nature! Your next point to rest and relax is a photo-stop at the viewpoint Dragoš Sedlo (1.242 metres high), where magnificent view reveals in front of you - the waterfall Skakavac (grasshopper) whose water glides with full force through the steep 80-metre-high rocks. Ascend to the plateau Prijedor and discover some magical panoramic views of this park and nearby mountains: Maglić, Zelengora and Volujak. The peak Maglić (2.386 metres) is dominating among them as the highest peak in Bosnia & Herzegovina, situated right on the border



with Montenegro.

From Prijedor, hike continues until you reach the last jewel of today's trip - Trnovačko Lake, meaning that trail crosses the Montenegrin border. The lake is located at a height of 1.517 metres and it's well known for its exceptional pure and clear water. What makes it so special and lovely is its unique shape of a heart! Trnovačko Lake is one of the seven glacial lakes that adorn Zelengora – one of the most beautiful mountains of the Dinaric Alps system. Due to their round shape, great depths and mesmerizing beauty, they are also known as 'mountain eyes'.

The adventure becomes complete only during well-deserved rest in the heart of the National Park and a picnic-lunch with homemade specialties, typical for this region.

Leisurely hike back for 1.5 hours, and move on with your trip to the rafting camp situated on the river Drina. At the end of this very dynamic day, you'll have plenty of time over dinner to reflect on your day and relive all the gorgeous impressions and memories from the great hike. Use this time to unwind and prepare for the next day rafting adventure. **Overnight: Rafting camp.**

Day 8

UNESCO'S Tara River Canyon with rafting

 22 km  3:30 h

After You have certainly heard that Tara River goes by the name "Tear of Europe" due to its purity. You can drink water from its stream anywhere you catch it, in every part of its flow. Tara River's canyon is 1.300 metres deep, which makes it the greatest canyon in Europe and the second deepest in the world, right after Colorado River in USA. Since 1977, Tara canyon is under the protection of UNESCO, and it's in the category of 25 the most important world natural heritages. Experience a rafting adventure full of joy, excitement and exhilaration on a river in emerald green and turquoise colour variations, surrounded by lush and vibrant nature. As a part of your team, extremely skilled and trained guides will be there for you, every step of the way for the 22 km ride that stretches from Montenegro to Bosnia and Herzegovina. If the weather allows, you will spend some great time by the fire, hanging around with the open-hearted locals.

Overnight: Rafting camp.



Day 9

Rafting camp – Mratinje Dam - UNESCO's NP Durmitor: Durmitor's Wild beauty



After a day spent on and around the Tara River, the tour takes us along the shorter headwater of the River Drina, the wild and beautiful Piva River. On your ride through the impressive Piva Plateau, you will have several opportunities to make some amazing photos during the photo stops. The most incredible stop will be the one on top of the Mratinje Dam! Standing 220 meters above the river, you will understand its true greatness and power. It was needed more than 820,000 cubic metres of concrete and 5,000 tonnes of steel to tame it. It will not take long, and you will already arrive in Durmitor Mountain, still feeling swept off of your feet by the breath-taking views from the dam.

Welcome to the nature lovers' paradise! Located in the north-west of Montenegro, UNESCO's protected National Park Durmitor is adorned with 48 peaks, more than 2,000 meters high, 18 glacial lakes above on 1,400 meters altitude called "Mountain Eyes" and five spectacular canyons, best presented with the deepest canyon in Europe - the Tara River Canyon. Throughout the whole area of the National Park, the great height range and variety of habitats have enabled the flourishing flora and fauna, creating an extraordinary wealth of nature. The park is home to 1,325 species of flora, including one of the last virgin black pine forests in Europe. Some of the incredible animals that can be found on this mountain are the brown bear, wild cat and chamois. Whether you are exploring Durmitor through hiking or sightseeing from a vehicle, you will have the exceptional opportunity to discover authentic mountain villages whose inhabitants live similarly as their ancestors did hundreds of years ago. Away from the modern influences of today's world, you will be transported back in time to traditional houses, old cus-

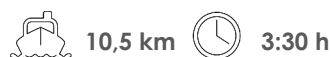


toms, simple every day activities and healthy nutrition. This gourmet-hiking adventure is an ideal opportunity to chat with the locals (who mainly keep sheep), try the homemade, authentic food and to get to know the resilient mentality of people who have spent their entire life surviving in nature.

The journey is about to get very exciting! You will hike around the biggest and most beautiful lake on Durmitor, the Black Lake, surrounded by the magnificent scenery and its giant peak Meded ("Bear"), above the lake. The Black Lake is divided into two lakes named the Great and the Small Lake, connected by a small strait of water which dries up in the summer. The lake is filled by numerous mountain streams, and it truly represents the "Wild beauty" of Montenegro at its best. For those who want more than this easy-level hike, we prepared more: Zminje Lake with captivating view over the surrounding cliffs and the dazzling Barro Lake resembling a pop-up postcard. **Overnight: Žabljak.**

Day 10

UNESCO's NP Durmitor - Ostrog Monastery - NP Skadar Lake / boat ride



It won't take long until the openhearted and welcoming locals, the tranquil ambience and stunning nature of Durmitor make you start feeling like locals. Still, it's time to move on. The tour continues to the South of the country, and your next destination is the extraordinary Ostrog Monastery. It is built in a cliff face, 900 metres above the Zeta River valley. The entire ambience is breath taking and filled with serenity. The Monastery is dedicated to Saint Vasilije of Ostrog, and is a world-wide known pilgrimage site for Orthodox Christians. The ride along the fertile valley of Zeta River will bring you to the fishing village of Virpazar is a departure point for boat ride on Skadar Lake. As you glide through the mirroring water, the numerous lake's attractions reveal: the extraordinary birds, the water lilies in full bloom, and wild, secluded beaches. Skadar Lake has an area ranging from 370 to 530 square kilometres, depending on the water level and it is the biggest lake of the Balkans. The river Bojana creates a connection between Skadar Lake and the Adriatic Sea through a large mountain massive that separates the two.

At the end of this day, dedicated to the religious and natural sights of Montenegro, arrive in Budva, the touristic capital of the country. **Overnight: Budva.**



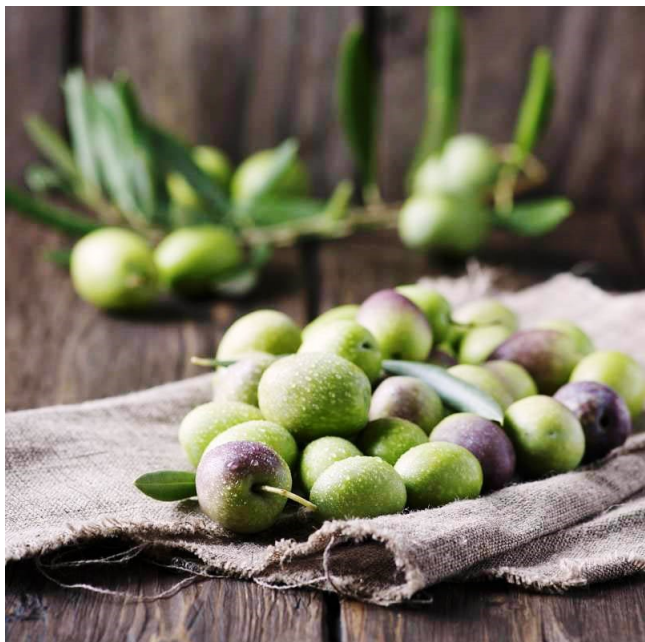


Day 11

The Bay of Kotor: Perast town – Boat ride to the Our Lady of the Rocks isle – UNESCO'S City of Kotor – Olive oil tasting

 2,5 km
  2:30 h
  230 m

This day is devoted to the Bay of Kotor with its unique scenery. First stop is at the town of Perast, a little settlement baroque in style, where a relaxing boat ride to the picturesque island of Our Lady of the Rocks starts. This artificial islet is home to a church known by mystifying story and valuable artefacts like paintings by local artist, votive silver tablets and a hair-made tapestry. After short boat tour, marvellous Kotor kept in the mediaeval wall-frame is welcoming us. A walking tour shows multicultural richness through churches of Saint Nicholas and Saint Luka, the Cathedral of Saint Tryphon and all the glory of this UNESCO site. Use your free time to continue wandering around the stone paved town, or enjoy offer of fish restaurant at one of romantic squares. The break is perfect preparation for more than 1.500-step-hike which reaches the Fortress of St. John, point with mind-blowing panorama of Kotor Bay which for sure will become part of lifelong memories. For the end of this day, one more thing is left - a visit to the Morić Olive Farm, family-owned and operated estate, settled in Luštica Bay. It brings you an exquisite opportunity to feel the spirit and explore the rich heritage of the authentic household, taste the



organic extra virgin olive oil of premium quality and simply enjoy the ambience of one of Montenegro's most famed olive growing areas. **Overnight: Budva or Kotor Bay.**

Day 12

Departure day

Departure from Podgorica or any non-listed airport .

If you are departing from **Podgorica** a few days after the tour end, you can book additional nights with us.

Departure transfer to the listed airport is included. Private transfers to non-listed airports **are available on request.**

Please check the options with your local expert.

General inclusions // Valid both for Standard and Premium Package:

- Airport arrival and departure transfers
- All sightseeing tours and transfers that are included in the itinerary, except those marked as „optional tours“
- **Experiences:** Taste & Bike Belgrade Experience tour®, Wine tasting in Sremski Karlovci, Sarajevo Food Experience Walking Tour®, Tara River rafting, Skadar Lake boat ride, Boka Bay Olive Oil tasting
- **Entrance tickets:** Tara NP, Wooden Town, Sutjeska NP with picnic lunch, Durmitor NP, Skadar Lake NP, Boat trip from Perast to the island of Our Lady of the Rocks, Kotor Old town and St. John Fortress
- Professional tour guidance throughout the tour
- VAT, accommodation taxes and city taxes
- Tour logistics and organization by a licensed local agency

Standard package // Accommodation:

- 3 BB in Belgrade in Hotel Royal Inn 4* / Hotel Mark 4* / Hotel Amsterdam 4* or similar
- 1 HB (half board) on Zlatibor Mountain in Hotel Palisad 4* standard / Hotel Mir 4* or similar
- 2 BB in Sarajevo in Hotel Old Town 4* / Hotel Holiday 4* / Hotel Colors Inn 4* or similar
- 1 FB (full board) and 1 HB (half board) in Rafting Camp near Tara river in authentic log cabins
- 1 BB on Žabljak (Durmitor NP) in Hotel Zlatni Bor 3* / Holiday Home Villas Calimero or similar
- 2 BB in Budva in Hotel Moskva 4* / Hotel Bracera 4* / Hotel Adria 4* or similar

Premium package // Accommodation:

- 3 BB in Belgrade in Hotel Saint Ten 5* / Hotel Hyatt Regency 5* / Hotel Hilton 4* superior or similar
- 1 HB (half board) on Zlatibor Mountain in Hotel Palisad 4* superior / Hotel Buket 4* superior or similar
- 2 BB in Sarajevo in Hotel Courtyard by Marriot 4* superior / Hotel President 4* superior / Swissotel 5* or similar
- 1 FB (full board) and 1 HB (half board) in Rafting Camp near Tara river in authentic log cabins
- 1 BB on Žabljak (Durmitor NP) in Ethno Village Zminica / Hotel Soa 4* or similar
- 2 BB in Boka Bay in hotel Casa del Mare Amfora 4* / Casa del Mare Mediterraneo 5* / The Chedi Luštica Bay 5* or similar

Notices:

- Tips and portorage services are not included in price
- Final choice of the hotels depends on current availability. The tour organiser reserves the right to change the hotel due to availability reasons but guarantees the same category, service quality and similar location of the accommodation unit
- Minimum number of passengers needed for guaranteed tour departure: 2
- The tour organiser reserves the right to change the itinerary of the tour due to unexpected slow-moving traffic at international borders. These changes will not affect the basic itinerary
- It is the responsibility of the passengers to get acquainted with visa requirements of all the countries they are travelling to or will be in transit
- General Travel Conditions issued by Tour Operator d.o.o. and reconciled with YUTA standards are valid for this programme

