

13 Nights / 14 Days

HIDDEN BALKAN – 7 Countries

Serbia – Bosnia – Croatia – Montenegro
– Albania – North Macedonia – Bulgaria

- Seize a moment and enjoy the picturesque nature while on the retro train Nostalgia
- Overeat yourself by tasting ćevapi, burek, tufahija, and other well-known Bosnian delicacies
- Relax and enjoy the sun at one of the magical sandy beaches in Budva
- Feel the unique Albanian spirit in the charming town of Shkodër
- Indulge yourself with the finest authentic salt water pearls in Ohrid



The good thing about our tours is that they can be customized to suit your desires. If you need more time to settle in and adjust before the tour, we'll be glad to book additional overnights for you. You are welcome to contact us for more details!

Day 1

Arrival to Belgrade

Upon arrival in Belgrade, the capital of Serbia, you will be welcomed by your driver and escorted to your hotel. On the short coach ride from the Nikola Tesla airport, sit back, relax and enjoy the sights of New Belgrade with its prominent 'blocks' – a classic example of Socialist architecture, built after World War II – and modern business centres, including the imposing Ušće Tower. Along the way, your driver will show you and tell some stories about the Western Gate of Belgrade, the famous Belgrade Arena and the monumental Palace of Serbia. Check-in at your hotel. Use your free time to rest and prepare for the trip. At 7pm in the hotel reception, you will be greeted by your guide who will introduce himself and provide you with detailed information about the entire trip. You will also meet the other travellers in the group. For the rest of the evening, we recommend you take a short, leisurely walk through one of the oldest quarters towards the bohemian heart of Belgrade - Skadarlija. In a charming 19th century cobbled street you will find many numerous 'kafanas' where you can try delicious local specialties while listening to traditional music. Overnight.

Day 2

Belgrade – Fruška Gora – Sremski Karlovci – Novi Sad – Belgrade

Breakfast. On this tour, you will explore the most interesting sights of Vojvodina, a province in the north of Serbia. You will be driven through picturesque scenery and Serbia's famous wine region towards the 'Serbian Holy Land', home to 17 functioning Serbian Orthodox monasteries. You will visit well preserved monastery Krušedol, where you'll have the opportunity to buy wine and rakija made by the monks. The tour continues on to town of Sremski Karlovci. A real gem of Serbian culture and spirituality, Sremski Karlovci feels like a 'museum town' with its Baroque centre, the Patriarchal

Court, the Orthodox Cathedral of Saint Nicholas and the first Serbian secondary school (gymnasium). It is also famous for wine production and the town's annual Wineball festival. You will finish your tour of this charming town with a visit and wine tasting at one of the region's most prominent wineries.



Further on the tour, you will visit the 2021 European Capital of Culture, Novi Sad. Located on the historical border of two former empires – the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman – as a result, the capital of Vojvodina is a multi-cultural city with an interesting mix of architectural influences. On a sightseeing tour around the city, you will walk around the city's pedestrian zone, past the City Hall, a Catholic church, the old city centre, the former house of Albert Einstein's wife Mileva, the cultural foundation Matica Srpska and a synagogue. Then you'll follow the right bank of Danube and visit Petrovaradin, or the so-called 'Danube's Gibraltar', where the fortress is located. Drive back to Belgrade. Overnight.

Day 3

Leisure day Belgrade Great Sightseeing Tour

After breakfast, you will embark on a tour (driving and walking) around Belgrade, a capital city well known for its various architectural styles, dynamic history and fantastic views of one of the biggest river confluences in the whole of Europe. Start the tour visiting the Museum of Yugoslav History, a memorial complex devoted to the life and deeds of Josip Broz Tito, the political leader of Yugoslavia. Next, you will pass by the stadium of FC Red Star – the former European and World Cup champions, and proceed to the Temple of Saint Sava, Belgrade's patron saint. Very much a symbol of the city, this impressive building can be seen from any part of the capital.

After a short break at the Temple's plateau, the panoramic tour will then take you from Slavija Square, to Saint Mark's Church, the Serbian National Parliament and White Palace, and on to Republic Square. This most central point of Belgrade is surrounded by such cultural institutions as the National



Theatre and National Museum. The tour will then head along the lively Knez Mihailo Street, the main pedestrian and shopping zone, before stopping for a visit to the Orthodox Cathedral Church of Saint Michael the Archangel, which is located just across from the Building of Patriarchate. Your guide will tell you about the tavern around the corner, the oldest in the city and intriguingly known as '?' (Question Mark), before continuing on to Kalemegdan Park and Belgrade Fortress, the most important cultural-historic complex of the city, situated on the confluence of the rivers Sava and Danube.

Day 4

Belgrade – Šargan Eight – Wooden-town – Zlatibor

Breakfast and check-out. Morning departure from Belgrade, heading west towards the picturesque Ovčar-Kablar Gorge, through which the West Morava River meanders. The tour will continue on to Tara National Park, and you will have time to reflect on its beauty from aboard the authentic, retro 'Nostalgia' train which runs along the narrow-gauge heritage railway, Šargan Eight. Travelling from the bottom of Šargan mountain on route shaped like the number eight (hence the name), you will be transported back in time while enjoying the stunning mountain scenery and numerous tunnels and viaducts. At the beginning of the 20th century, the railway used to be a part of the railway from Belgrade to Sarajevo. After enjoying the breathtaking nature, you will arrive at the ethno village Drvengrad (Wooden Town), built by

prominent movie director Emir Kusturica. The village, which includes the Mečavnik Hotel, houses, galleries, shops, a cinema and a church, is made of natural materials, mostly wood. Since 2008, the village plays host to the annual Küstendorf Film and Music Festival and Drvengrad has been visited by the likes of Johnny Depp, Monica Belucci, Jim Jarmusch and many others.



After exploring Drvengrad, there will be a short drive to the famous Zlatibor Mountain, home of the first royal resort in Serbia. Here you can enjoy a relaxing walk around the quaint town centre of this picturesque air spa. In the evening, an enjoyable dinner of traditional Serbian food typical of the region will be served in the hotel. Overnight.

Day 5

Zlatibor – Višegrad – Sarajevo

Breakfast and check-out. The tour continues to Bosnia and Herzegovina and a short drive takes you to Višegrad, where Emir Kusturica used his imagination and creativity to build Andrićgrad (also known as Stone Town). It is a cultural centre with numerous buildings and facilities built on the banks of the Drina River near the famous bridge (a monument under the protection of UNESCO). The bridge is referenced in the title of Ivo Andrić's novel *The Bridge on the Drina* and in honour of the Nobel Prize winning author, Kusturica's town was called Andrićgrad (literally translated as Andrić's Town). In Andrićgrad, the tour will stop for lunch at an unusual restaurant called Zlatna Moruna, the interior of which is decorated with frescoes by well-known artist Bisenija Tereščenko. After lunch, the tour will continue on to Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Check-in at the hotel. After a short rest, the Sarajevo sightseeing tour will start, covering all the main sights including: Vijećnica or Sarajevo City Hall, the building of

which was finished during the Austro-Hungarian period; the old downtown of the city called Baščaršija; the historical and cultural centre of Sarajevo with authentic shops and souqs from the Ottoman era; the Orthodox Church from the 16th century; the Gazi Husrev-bey mosque; the Sahat Tower from the 17th century; and the first public toilet in Europe. Next you will head on to the



Latin Bridge where Gavrilo Princip shot the successor to the Austro-Hungarian throne Franz Ferdinand, consequently starting the First World War. After crossing the bridge, you will reach Bezistan, a market complex from the 16th century, and then on to the main pedestrian zone Ferhadiya with the Sarajevo Synagogue from 1580 and a Catholic cathedral from 1881. Return to the hotel and overnight.

Day 6

Sarajevo – Mostar – Blagaj – Trebinje

Breakfast and check-out. Drive to one of the most beautiful cities of the Balkan Peninsula, Mostar. During the walking tour, you will visit the symbol of the city, Balkan TOP 10 and the most photographed sight in the country – the Old Bridge (a UNESCO protected landmark). You will then proceed to Koski Mehmed Pasha Mosque, the Crooked Bridge and the old tanner's quarter Tabhana. Free time in Mostar for getting lunch on the banks of the Neretva River, with an amazing view of the bridge that rises above you. The excursion continues to Blagaj (a site on the UNESCO Tentative List), an old town from the 15th century where the Kosača noble family ruled. Blagaj was also the crib of Islam of today's Bosnia and Herzegovina, when dervish Sari Satluk built a khanqah at the riverhead of Buna. During the short tour, enjoy the view of the monastery located in a fairy-tale environment, beneath the cliffs, on the shores of the

emerald green river Buna.

The next destination of the day is Trebinje, a picturesque town with a wonderful mix of sights originating from a mix of different cultures. The tour starts with a visit to Arslanagića Bridge, a dream for artists and photographers alike; this stone bridge with its peaceful atmosphere will take you 400 years back in time. During the leisurely walk through the narrow streets of the old town, you'll see the most important sights of Trebinje as you make your way to the so called 'Poet's Square' where you can sit under the 115 year old trees, which are the symbol of the town. In this beautiful town, Emir Kusturica, the world famous movie director, made one of his last movies, with Monica Bellucci in the leading role. Overnight in the hotel.

Day 7

Trebinje – Dubrovnik – Budva

Breakfast and check – out. Drive and arrival in Dubrovnik, one of the most significant monuments in the world and one of Europe's best preserved walled cities, known since the 7th century. The old town is surrounded by a 2 km long wall that gives a great opportunity to see old Dubrovnik from above during a one hour relaxing walk; the city's churches, fortifications and monuments are a real must-see. Dubrovnik has enchanted a lot of famous persons to devote their pieces of art to the city, thus in this city of marble and light coloured stone, you will find numerous art galleries and unique shops. In the historical centre of Dubrovnik, you will visit the main street Stradun, the main square Placa, Pile Gate, the Rector's Palace, Sponza Palace, the walls of the Old Town, the church of Saint Blaise, the cathedral, the Jesuit church, Orlando's Column, Big Onofrio's Fountain, the city port and other hidden gems.



Drive to Budva, the town known as the tourist capital of Montenegro and for all the right reasons. Highlights include

walk through the mediaeval cobbled streets of Budva's Old Town, a cocktail on the warm sandy beach and incredible views of the natural beauty of Budva, the bay and neighbouring islands. Located on a small peninsula, the Old Town represents a treasure chest of cultural heritage. Along the narrow streets and around the squares you will find famous buildings such as the Church of the Holy Trinity, which houses the tomb of the exquisite writer Stjepan Mitrov Ljubiša, and the churches of Saint Ivan, Santa Maria in Punta and Saint Sava. At the end of the tour, you will have some free time and we suggest using it to enjoy some fresh seafood and local wines at one of the many restaurants. Check-in to the hotel. Overnight.

Day 8

Leisure day

Budva – Kotor – Budva

Breakfast. Today you will head to the Bay of Kotor. With its unique landscape, it is a must-see location for more than 500 cruisers during a year. Our first stop a stop will be at the town of Perast, little settlement in baroque style. From Perast you'll start a relaxing boat ride along Boka Kotorska Bay to picturesque island of Our Lady of the Rock. This manmade Island hosts a church with valuable paintings of local artists, silver votive tablets and a famous votive tapestry.



After the boat ride, you will continue to Kotor, an old Mediterranean town that dates back to the 12th and 14th century. A walking tour will allow you to explore this UNESCO site, including the churches of Saint Nicholas and Saint Luke, the Cathedral of Saint Tryphon and other cultural moments. You will have free time to continue wandering around the old paved town, or have lunch in a restaurant on one of romantic squares. Back to Budva and free time for individual activities and enjoying in modern Mediterranean town. Overnight.

Day 9

Budva – Shkodër – Tirana

Breakfast and check-out. The tour continues through pristine nature, a national park and past Lake Skadar, the largest lake in Southern Europe. The Albanian spirit is best felt by visiting charming town of Shkodër, one of the oldest towns in Europe, unique by its narrow streets, stone walls and ancient houses. At the entrance of the town, the tour will start with a visit to the remains of the Venetian fortress Rozafa, one of the biggest and most famous castles in Albania. It rises imposingly on a rocky hill, surrounded by the Buna and Drin rivers, and offers amazing views of Shkodër, Lake Skadar and its water-intersected surroundings. Continue on the tour to the centre of the town, walking through the well preserved and most popular pedestrian street Kole Idromeno towards the other sights of the town, including the Ebu Bekr Mosque, the Orthodox Cathedral of the Nativity and the monument of Mother Teresa.

Drive to Tirana, the capital city of Albania as well as its largest city. Situated on the banks of the Lana river, Tirana has outstanding architecture, wide boulevards, parks, shops and cafés. The heart of Tirana is the Skanderbeg Square, where you will find many important ministry buildings, as well as the National Opera, the National Bank and the National Library. The square is dominated by a statue of Lord Skanderbeg, an Albanian hero and symbol of freedom and independence. During the sightseeing tour, you will be introduced to the architecture of the Mussolini period and see the city's most important landmarks, including the Et'hem Bey Mosque, the National Museum of History, the Clock Tower and the Presidential Palace. As you stroll through the central part of the city, you can enjoy the many murals and works of art painted on the buildings by various artists and understand why Tirana is known as 'the city of colourful buildings'. Check-in to the hotel. Overnight.

Day 10

Tirana – Elbasan – Ohrid – Skopje

Breakfast and check-out. On the way to North Macedonia, we will make a stop in Elbasan, the third largest city in Albania, located on the Shkumbin River. While the city was the main centre of Albanian nationalism during Ottoman rule,

Elbasan is best known for its castle district. Here you can still admire the old city walls built by the Ottoman sultan Mehmet II on the ruins of the Roman and Byzantine fortifications, which gave the city the name of Eli-Bashan ("I put the hand"). Inside the fortress, while walking the cobblestone streets past old houses and excellent restaurants, you will see the Royal Mosque that dates back to the 15th century, the Orthodox Church of Saint Mary and the Sahati Clock Tower.



Continue to Ohrid, the soul of the Balkans and the cradle of Slavic literacy. Thanks to its extraordinary natural beauty and rich historical and cultural heritage, Ohrid was proclaimed as both a Cultural and Natural World Heritage Site by UNESCO. One of the oldest lakes in the world will welcome you with a photographic setting, impeccably clear water that reflects the lake's picturesque high mountain surroundings. This former capital of the First Bulgarian Empire is the spiritual and national centre of Northern Macedonia. In the same area where the first Slavic university was founded, you will have the chance to visit over 300 Orthodox churches and monasteries. Drive to Skopje. Check-in to the hotel. Overnight.

Day 11

Leisure day

Skopje Sightseeing Tour

Breakfast. The capital of North Macedonia, for a long time Skopje has been the meeting point of different nations and cultures in the heart of the Balkans. After an earthquake in 1963, Skopje was rebuilt and it is now a modern city with a population of almost one million. With its fortress, cultural and historical monuments, archaeological sites and the nearby Matka canyon, it is a very attractive tourist destination. Start your sightseeing tour in the old part of city with a stroll through the

narrow streets of the Old Bazaar, the biggest bazaar preserved in the Balkans today. With the 1500-year old Kale fortress perched above, listen to stories about the Sultan Murad Mosque and Daut Pasha Hamam before walking across the Stone Bridge, close by the Archaeological Museum of North Macedonia, towards Macedonia Square and its amazing fountain with the 'Warrior on a Horse' monument. In the newer and more modern part of the city, you will also see the Porta Macedonia, the Memorial House of Mother Teresa, the Art Bridge and numerous statues of prominent North Macedonian figures.



For the remainder of the day, we suggest you use your free time to rest in the hotel before heading out to experience the city's nightlife. We recommend heading to Debar Maalo – an area famed for its restaurants – and trying numerous North Macedonian delicacies including shopska salad, ajvar (roasted red pepper spread), sarma (minced meat rolled in cabbage/vine leaves), tavče gravče (baked beans) and stuffed peppers. Back to the hotel. Overnight.

Day 12 Skopje – Rila – Sofia

Breakfast and check-out. Drive to Bulgaria and visiting the Monastery of Saint Ivan of Rila, the largest and most famous Eastern Orthodox monastery in Bulgaria. The monastery was destroyed in the fire at the beginning of the 19th century, but was rebuilt and now it is not just a tourist attraction, but one of the holiest places in Bulgaria. In 1983 the monastery was declared a monument of culture under UNESCO protection and because of their importance, the frescoes are protected by glass walls. Later on we are driving to Sofia. Surrounded by sprawling parkland, Sofia, the capital and the largest city of the Republic of Bulgaria, lies at the foot of popular ski mountain, Vitosha. Founded thousands of years ago, the city

continues to develop as the country's cultural and economic center. With a population of 1,250,000, Sofia is a dynamic Eastern European capital, distinguished by its unique combination of European and Communist-style architecture as well as many beautiful orthodox churches. On the tour through Sofia you will be able to see the impressive Alexander Nevski Cathedral, the multicolored Russian Church, Church of St. Sophia, as well as the National Theatre, one the city's most important landmarks, Jewish Synagogue, National Art Gallery, Archeological Museum and Parliament square, the Ruins of Serdica,



the Mosque.

Use your free time in the evening to feel like local in Vitosha Boulevard. Here you can find world-famous brands shops, and since it is a pedestrian zone, it is a very pleasant place for strolling and relaxation. Overnight.

Day 13 Sofia – Niš – Belgrade

Breakfast and check-out. Return to Serbia, this time to the eastern region, of which the city of Niš is the most important destination. Niš, mostly known for being the birthplace of the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great, is a crossroad between East and West and therefore sometimes called the 'Gate of East and West'. As the host of the most visited jazz festival of Southeast Europe, you will remember it for its frequent restaurants and cafés, always filled with the warmth and hospitality of the local people. During the tour of Niš, you will see several unique sights of global significance. The most important landmark of Niš is the archaeological park Mediana (temporarily closed), a cultural property of exceptional importance as it contains the remains of the residence of one of the most important Roman emperors, Constantine the Great. Another landmark you won't forget easily is Skull Tower.

Made of 952 human skulls, it is one of the most macabre historical sites in the world. You will also visit the Niš Fortress, the largest monument in the city of Niš and the best preserved Turkish military fortress in Serbia, located in the city centre, on the bank of the Nišava River. At the end of the tour, head to the cobbled Tinkers Alley and feel the spirit of the only remaining part of Niš's old čaršija (market), now home to numerous cafés and restaurants. For an authentic local experience try the grilled meat, arguably the best in the country. After an exciting day, drive to Serbia's capital city, Belgrade. Check-in to the hotel. Overnight.

Day 14 Belgrade Departure

Breakfast and hotel check-out. As most of our clients decide to extend their trip within their own organisation, transfer to the airport at the end of the tour is not included in the overall price. Any guests who would like their agent to organise a departure transfer on their behalf are welcome to contact us. End of services.

If you feel like you are not ready to end this trip and would like to spend more time on your vacation, let us know and we will book some more overnights for you. You are welcome to contact us for more details!

GENERAL INCLUSIONS / VALID BOTH FOR STANDARD AND SUPERIOR PACKAGE

- Airport arrival transfer
- All sightseeing tours and transfers that are written in this program
- Entrance tickets to the Museum of Yugoslav History, Wooden Town, Blagaj, Rozafa Castle and Skull Tower
- Ticket for the 90-minutes ride on Museum Train - Šargan Eight**, monastery Krušedol
- Boat trip from Perast to the island of Our Lady of the Rocks
- 1 bottle of water (0.5 l) daily for each passenger
- Professional tour guidance throughout the tour
- VAT, Accommodation taxes and City taxes in every country
- Tour logistics and organization by licensed incoming agency

STANDARD package / ACCOMMODATION

- 4 BB in Belgrade** in Hotel Royal Inn 4* / Hotel Mark 4* / Hotel Prag 4* or similar
- 1 HB in Zlatibor** in Hotel Palisad standard 4* / Hotel Mir 4* / Hotel Iris 4* or similar
- 1 BB in Sarajevo** in Hotel Holiday 4* / Hotel Bosnia 4* / Hotel Old Town 4* or similar
- 1 BB in Trebinje** in Hotel Platani 4* / Hotel Central Park 4* / Hotel SL Industry 4* or similar
- 2 BB in Budva** Hotel Moskva 4* / Hotel Bracera 4* / Hotel Tre Canne 4* or similar
- 1 BB in Tirana** in Hotel Senator 4* / Hotel Golden City & My Spa 4* / Hotel Prestige 4* or similar
- 2 BB in Skopje** in Hotel Premium 4* / Hotel Ibis Skopje City Center 4* / Hotel Queen's 4* or similar
- 1 BB in Sofia** in Hotel BW Premier Collection City 4* / Best Western Terminus Hotel 4* / Triada Hotel 4* or similar

SUPERIOR package / ACCOMMODATION

- 4 BB in Belgrade** in Hotel Saint Ten 5* / Hotel Hyatt Regency 5* / Hotel Hilton 5* or similar
- 1 HB in Zlatibor** in Hotel Palisad 4* superior / Hotel Mona 4* or similar
- 1 BB in Sarajevo** in Hotel Europe 5* / Hotel President 4* / Hotel Residence Inn by Marriott 4* or similar
- 1 BB in Trebinje** in Hotel Nar 4* / Hotel SL Industry 4* / Hotel Central Park 4* or similar
- 2 BB in Budva** Hotel Majestic 4* / Hotel Budva 4* / Hotel Avala Resort & Villas 4* or similar
- 1 BB in Tirana** in Hotel Rogner 5* / Maritim Hotel Plaza Tirana 5* / Hotel Mak Albania 5* or similar
- 2 BB in Skopje** in Park Hotel & Spa 5* / Hotel Arka 5* / Bushi Resort & Spa 5* or similar
- 1 BB in Sofia** in Grand Hotel Sofia 5* / Hotel Hilton 5* or similar