

# Bodie's Treasures of Serbia Tour

**Countries:** Serbia and Bosnia

**Duration:** 11 nights / 12 days tour



*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.*

## 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. Check-in at hotel. Overnight.

## Day 2 : Leisure day: Belgrade Sightseeing

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 with panoramic ride through central streets of Belgrade. Your first stop of the day will be Royal Palace. Continue your tour, pass the Marakana, stadium of Red Star football club, 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. The Church is built on the place where, as supposed, Sinan Pasha in 1595 burnt relic of Saint Sava, the first Serbian archbishop whose main achievement was creating independent Serbian Orthodox Church. This historical event was depicted on frescoes of the smaller Church nearby the Church of Saint Sava. St. Sava plateau located in front of the Church is the place where dozens thousands of people gather during Orthodox holidays

After a short break at the Temple's plateau, the panoramic tour will then take you from Slavija Square, down Nemanjina street to Government Building where you can see the tragic image – the ruins of Serbian General Staff Building that was one of the first buildings bombed by NATO in 1999.

Proceed to Monument of Stefan Nemanja for a photo stop. After this short break, the tour continues 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 delicious lunch break – ćevapi at one of the main places for ones that want to have this famous dish.

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. Coming back to the hotel. Organized group dinner at Skadarlija. Overnight.

## Day 3: Belgrade Sightseeing Tour - Zemun

After breakfast, you will start your tour to the Zemun, where you can feel the magic of its charming streets and get acquainted with the Austro-Hungarian architecture that beautifully adorns this part of the city. Walk along Gospodska Street and the Massaryk square', the Square of the Magistrate and continue to the bottom of Gardos hill and the most famous symbol of Zemun – the Millennium Tower.

The most curious visitors can take a 10-minute walk to the top of Gardoš Hill, where they will surely enjoy the view of the Danube and the spectacular Belgrade skyline. Don't forget to take some amazing photos.

Make a lunch break in Zemun and enjoy food of one of the great restaurants on Danube bank.

In the late afternoon hours, join an amazing cruise around Belgrade. Cruising through the Danube and Sava Rivers, you will have the opportunity to see the beauty of Belgrade through its historical and cultural landmarks, as well as the incredible nature surrounding it. During this comfortable and enjoyable trip you will be able to see the Kalemegdan Fortress, the confluence of the Sava and Danube rivers, Great War Island, Belgrade Waterfront as well as the many restaurants, bars and disco clubs situated on the river and called “splavs”. Let the warm breeze calm you, as you make a wish at the “Happy Buoy” (confluence) for a fantastic trip ahead.

Back to the hotel. Free time for your individual activities.

#### **Day 4: Belgrade – Topola – Žiča Monastery – Vrnjačka Banja**

After breakfast, you will start your tour to the Topola and Oplenac which are situated in the part of Serbia so-called Šumadija region, famous as the center of Royal Dynasties, and a strategic place for organization of Serbian Uprising and not less important, wine industry.

During the relaxing walk around the Oplenac, you will visit the St. George's temple and Mausoleum of the royal family Karadjordjevic. The church is situated on the very top of the hill. This monumental building with authentic beauty has a unique structure and extraordinary ornaments. You will be dazzled by the interior. The white marble floors and the lavish colourful glass mosaic on the walls will leave you amazed. In the museum you will be able to admire the art masterpieces and the personal belongings of the royal family. Continue driving to two very important monasteries – Žiča and Studenica.

Žiča Monastery, “mother of all churches”, is located in the “Valley of the Kings” where Serbian medieval state was born. Built in 1221, the monastery was founded by first Serbian King Stefan Nemanjić the First-Crowned. When the Serbian church became independent, at beginning of 13th century, Serbian Autocephaly was located in Žiča.

We will drive to Vrnjačka Banja, a metropolis of spa tourism and one of the most visited spa destination in Serbia and Balkans originating from the Roman Empire. Check-in.

#### **Day 5 : Vrnjačka Banja – Studenica - Djurdjevi Stupovi - Sopoćani – Sjenica**

Breakfast and check-out. We drive first to Novi Pazar in the Raška region, and visit Studenica Monastery, Djurdjevi Stupovi Monastery and Sopoćani Monastery.

Studenica Monastery is one of the biggest, most valuable, and most important monasteries of Serbian Orthodox Church. This is the second Serbian monument that had the honor to be included into the list of UNESCO World Heritage in 1986. Studenica was built in 1196 as endowment of Great Prince Stefan Nemanja, founder of independent Serbian state and ancestor of the dynasty that will rule in Serbia two full centuries. The monastery is stunningly situated in the forested hills of Šumadija. For those with a little extra energy, we will hike up to the Hermitage of St. Sava, the little wooden room where the founder of the Serbian church lived for many years while evangelizing the Serbs.

Studenica's importance and its preserved riches were the reason the Monastery was included into the „Rout of culture Transromanica“ (Route of Cultural Transformation) – a route that binds European heritage of the Romanesque period.

Djurdjevi Stupovi Monastery is located in the “Valley of the Kings” atop a small peak, between rivers Ibar and Raška, with panoramic views of Raška – the place where medieval state was born. Along with the ruins of Stari Ras (the first medieval Serbian capital) and Sopoćani, it is among the first Serbian sights included in the UNESCO World Heritage list.

*Sopoćani monastery*, one of the most valued religious sights of the Middle Age, was built in Raška architecture style with noticeable Romanesque influence. Its frescoes are world famous. It is also included in the “Rout of culture Transromanica”.

After full day of exploring rich ortodox heritage, we continue our drive to Sjenica. Check-in in the hotel and organized dinner in a local restaurant.



## Day 6: Sjenica - Uvac Special Nature Reserve - Zlatibor

Breakfast and check out. Transfer to Uvac Special Natural Reserve, located between the mountains Javor and Zlata. The main attraction of the reserve is its population of griffon vultures.

The griffon vulture is a relatively rare species of bird of prey whose population in Uvac is the biggest in Europe. The bird's wing span is about 3 m and they can weigh up to 11 kg, making it the biggest bird in Serbia. However, the griffon vulture is not the only attraction of the reserve; for centuries, the Uvac river has been making its way through the mountains, leaving deep meanders and creating caves that annually attract lots of tourists. Experience the breathtaking views from a jeep to truly enhance your adventure. To fulfill your day, we have prepared a nice lunch break in the nature.

Short drive to the famous Zlatibor Mountain, home of the first royal resort in Serbia. In the evening, join the traditional Serbian dance, kolo, with the cultural folklore ensemble, where you'll put your dance skills to the test! Check-in at the hotel.

## Day 7 Leisure Day: Zlatibor Mountain

This day will be devoted to relaxation and optional activities. Use your time for exploring the surroundings on your own, or join one of the few optionals we have prepared which will be presented by your tour guide.

We can suggest the following activities:

- *Gold Gondola Lift*: The longest panoramic lift in the world, is a whole new tourist attraction. Nine kilometres long, the Gold Gondola Lift offers you a unique opportunity to enjoy the amazing view from the centre of the Zlatibor Mountain all the way to Tornik, its highest peak.
- *„Wind-rose“ hiking*: Average altitude of 1000 and specific geographical location and so-called “wind-rose” at the sea and mountain air currents meeting point create a climate resort at Zlatibor. Medical research has shown that this place is suitable for treatment of various lung diseases, anaemia, neurasthenia, cordial and thyroid diseases.

In addition to this, we can offer you an excursion to the ethno village of Sirogojno, open-air museum mostly famous for ethnological museum and prominent “Sirogojno sweaters” made of raw wool, featuring visits to Stopića Cave and Gostilje waterfall.

In the evening join organized dinner in a restaurant with great view that overlooks the city. Overnight.

## Day 8: Zlatibor – Šargan Eight – Wooden-town – Višegrad – Foča

Breakfast and check-out. 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, called Šargan Eight. Travelling from the bottom of Šargan mountain on a 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.

After being immersed in breath-taking nature, you will arrive at the enchanting ethno village of Drvengrad (Wooden-town), built by world famous Serbian film director Emir Kusturica as a set for one of his films. The village, which includes the Mečavnik Hotel, houses, galleries, shops, a cinema and a church, is made of natural materials (mostly wood) and resembles a fairy tale scenery. Since 2008, the village has hosted 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.

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).

Višegrad is a cultural center with numerous buildings and facilities built on the banks of the Drina river, Višegrad is home a very famous bridge (a monument under the protection of UNESCO). This bridge is referenced in the title of Ivo Andrić's novel, The Bridge on the Drina, and central to the story of the book. In honor of the Nobel Prize winning author, Emir Kusturica built a stone town called Andrićgrad (literally translated as Andrić's Town). Enjoy the boat ride in Višegrad. 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. Your guide will tell you interesting stories as you take a brief stroll around the center of the town and refresh at one of the patisseries with delicious ice cream and soda. We drive to the rafting camp near Foča, in Bosnia. Check-in. Dinner.

### Day 9: Tara River Rafting - Belgrade

After breakfast we will start our adventure on the Tara River – rafting the rapids of the Tara River. The Tara River is renowned as the cleanest river water in all of Europe. When you finish your rafting adventure we will have lunch, then begin the drive back to the Belgrade. Check-in.

### Day 10: 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 the region's most prominent wineries. As Sremski Karlovci lies on the banks of Danube, you will have the opportunity to enjoy lunch on the shore of Central Europe's longest river.

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 11: Belgrade

Breakfast. This is a free day for your individual activities. Revisit Kalemegdan (once is not enough), get some famous Bosnian ćevaps, or shop at the little stores that dot downtown. There will be an organized farewell dinner.

### Day 12: Belgrade Departure

Breakfast and check-out. End of services. There will be an opportunity to fly to Montenegro to visit the beach, which can be arranged by **Balkan&more**. If you wish to stay on in Belgrade, or visit elsewhere in the region, Balkan&more is here to make those arrangements simple and affordable.

*If you are wishing to extend your stay along the stunning Adriatic coast, look no further than Balkan&more to craft the perfect adventure for you!*

## General inclusions // Valid both for Standard and Superior Package:

- ❖ Airport arrival and departure transfer
- ❖ All sightseeing tours and transfers that are included in the itinerary
- ❖ Entrance tickets to the Krušedol Monastery, Millenium Tower, Temple of Saint Sava, Beekeeping Museum, Oplenac, Wooden-town, 90-minutes ride on Museum Train – Šargan Eight\*, Studenica Monastery, Sopoćani Monastery, Rafting on Tara River with full board
- ❖ Royal Palace guided tour with entrance tickets
- ❖ 1 bottle of water (0.5l) daily for each passenger
- ❖ Professional tour guidance throughout the tour
- ❖ VAT, accommodation taxes and city taxes
- ❖ Tour logistics and organization by a licensed incoming agency

## Accommodation:

- ❖ 6 BB in Belgrade in a 4\* hotel
- ❖ 1 BB in Vrnjačka Banja in a 4\* hotel
- ❖ 1 BB in Sjenica in 4\* hotel
- ❖ 2 BB on Zlatibor Mountain in a 4\* hotel
- ❖ 1 FB in Rafting Camp in Foča

## Optional excursions:

- ❖ Gold Gondola Lift (on Day 7)
- ❖ „Wind-rose“ hiking (on Day 7)

## Meals:

- ❖ 11 breakfasts, 2 lunches and 4 dinners

## 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
- ❖ Ticket for the 90-minutes ride on Museum Train - Šargan Eight\*
- ❖ 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

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