

Private Serbia in Depth Tour 9N/10D

Serbia

Day 1: Welcome to Belgrade

Belgrade

Upon arrival in Belgrade, Serbia's vibrant capital, your driver will welcome you and escort you to your hotel. Enjoy the sights of **New Belgrade**, featuring Socialist architecture and modern business centres, during the ride from Nikola Tesla Airport. After hotel *check-in*, use your free time to rest and prepare for the journey ahead.

In the evening, we recommend a leisurely stroll through one of Belgrade's oldest quarters to **Skadarlija**, the city's bohemian heart. This charming 19th century cobbled street is lined with "**kafanas**" where you can enjoy delicious local specialties and traditional music.

Overnight: Belgrade

Day 2: Vibrant Capital of Serbia

Belgrade

Your journey through Belgrade begins with a panoramic tour highlighting its architectural diversity and history, from **bold Brutalism** to the emerging **Belgrade Waterfront**, a symbol of modern transformation. As we cross **Branko's Bridge**, you'll get a glimpse of New Belgrade's distinctive skyline, featuring landmarks like the Palace of Serbia (SIV), Belgrade Arena, and the modern **Ada Bridge**. Continuing, we pass through **the Dedinje district**, home to the Residence of Miloš the Great, embassies, grand villas, and **the Museum of Yugoslavia**, reflecting the country's complex history.

Our route then takes us past the **monument of Stefan Nemanja**, a key figure in Serbian history, and through **Slavija Square** before arriving at one of Belgrade's most iconic landmarks - the **Temple of Saint Sava**. We'll stop for a visit and devote time to this impressive sanctuary, the symbol of the city and the fourth-largest Orthodox temple in the world, adorned with stunning mosaics.

From there, we continue along King Alexander Boulevard, passing notable sites such as the National Assembly, before reaching the city's bustling pedestrian zone, where the walking part of our tour starts.

Strolling through Belgrade's vibrant streets, we arrive at **Republic Square** and continue down **Knez Mihailova Street**, the city's lively cultural and shopping centre.

EXPERIENCE MORE / Serbian Daily Routine: Your guide will take you to a hidden gem close to the main district, **the city's oldest tavern** intriguingly known as "?" (Question Mark), where you'll try Serbia's most cherished traditional drinks: **coffee and rakija**. Engage in lively conversation with your guide, who will share fascinating stories about local customs and the UNESCO-protected art of making "**šljivovica**", Serbia's renowned plum brandy.

Refreshed and immersed in the city's spirit, we will walk through **the historic Belgrade Fortress and Kalemegdan Park**, where you'll be amazed by the stunning views of the mighty **Sava and Danube rivers**. This vantage point offers an impressive contrast in Belgrade, where the old meets the modern and the land merges with the flowing water.

But the day isn't over yet – get ready to experience Belgrade from a whole new perspective, offering a **waterway panorama** that ties together everything you've discovered so far.

EXPERIENCE MORE / Belgrade Sundown Cruise: As the day winds down, set sail on an enchanting **river cruise** through Belgrade, where the grand Sava and Danube Rivers unveil the city's splendour. Cruise past iconic landmarks, absorb the vibrant riverside ambience and

feel the soothing evening breeze as you take in the stunning views of Belgrade's **skyline, bridges, and historic landmarks.**

Overnight: Belgrade

Day 3: Treasures of Vojvodina

Belgrade - Fruška Gora NP - Sremski Karlovci - Novi Sad - Belgrade

Today, you will explore the most interesting sights of **Vojvodina**, a province in northern Serbia. You will be driven through picturesque scenery and Serbia's famous wine region towards Fruška Gora NP, the "**Serbian Holy Land**", which is home to 17 functioning Serbian Orthodox monasteries. You will visit the well-preserved **Krušedol Monastery**, hear captivating stories from the monks, and immerse yourself in the monastery's rich history.

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). With its rich winemaking tradition and historical significance, the city stands as one of the focal points for Serbian wine culture.

EXPERIENCE MORE / Wines of Fruška Gora: Step into the enchanting world of **the Fruška Gora wine region**, renowned for its centuries-old winemaking heritage. Nestled amidst picturesque vineyards and rolling hills, this area is home to some of **Serbia's finest wines**. At one of its local wineries, you'll **enjoy a delightful array of wines** that perfectly showcase the region's diversity and craftsmanship. Don't miss trying locally produced **Bermet**, an internationally acclaimed Serbian wine that famously graced the tables of the iconic Titanic as a cherished delicacy.

Your next stop will be **Novi Sad**, the vibrant capital of Vojvodina and 2021 European Capital of Culture. This **multicultural gem** is renowned for hosting **EXIT**, Southeast Europe's largest music festival. Wander through its lively pedestrian zone, where historic landmarks like the City Hall and the old city centre blend with cultural sites, including the former home of Albert Einstein's wife Mileva and the city's historic synagogue. Explore the impressive **Petrovaradin Fortress**, often called "Danube's Gibraltar", where you can enjoy stunning views of the Danube River and the cityscape, perfect for capturing unforgettable moments.

After a short drive, you will return back to **Belgrade** and enjoy the rest of your evening.

Overnight: Belgrade

Day 4: Danube's Ancient Waters

Belgrade – Golubac – Lepenski Vir – Speed Boat Tekija - Kladovo

This day is dedicated to uncovering the wonders of **Eastern Serbia**, a region where history, nature, and adventure intertwine. Depart early from Belgrade, heading to **the legendary Golubac Fortress**, a two-hour drive along the scenic Danube River. Built at the gateway to **the Iron Gates Gorge**, this imposing fortress stands where the Danube transforms from its widest expanse into a dramatic passage through the Carpathian Mountains. The strategic location made Golubac a key stronghold in centuries past.

Our journey then takes us to **Lepenski Vir**, a place that takes you back over 8,000 years to **one of Europe's earliest civilizations**. This archaeological site features intriguing sculptures of river gods and the remnants of a mysterious culture that flourished along the Danube long before recorded history. Imagine the lives of these ancient people as you walk through their reconstructed village.

Next, we'll head to **Tekija** for a thrilling **private speedboat ride** through the breathtaking Iron Gates Gorge.

EXPERIENCE MORE / Iron Gates Speedboat Adventure: Feel the rush as you speed between towering cliffs, taking in the stunning views of the majestic landscape. Along the way, you'll encounter the incredible Decebalus Rock Sculpture, Europe's largest stone carving, and the ancient Tabula Traiana, a Roman inscription that has withstood centuries of river currents. This unforgettable journey offers a perfect blend of history, nature, and adventure.

Your journey ends in **Kladovo**, a peaceful riverside town with a rich Roman heritage where you'll *check-in* to the hotel.

Overnight: Kladovo

Day 5: History and Wine Trails

Kladovo – Vratna – Rajačke Pimnice - Niš

Your private Serbian adventure leads us towards **Vratna**, known for its stunning natural wonders. Here, explore the Vratna Gates, also called the stone arches of Vratna, towering rock formations that are remnants of an ancient, massive cave. These awe-inspiring natural arches are nestled within the dramatic canyon of **the Vratna River** and are considered a rare geological phenomenon, found in only a few places worldwide.

Next, make your way to **Rajačke Pimnice**, a charming wine village renowned for its unique stone cellars.

EXPERIENCE MORE / Wines and Flavours of Eastern Serbia: Wander through the cobblestone streets and explore the underground cellars, hand-built by locals in the 19th century. Once a key hub in the region's wine trade, Rajačke Pimnice offers a rare glimpse into the area's winemaking traditions, where ancient techniques are still cherished to this day. Explore these historic cellars, and savour a leisurely lunch featuring regional delicacies, perfectly paired with a glass of wine.

Our last stop is **Niš**, a dynamic city in southern Serbia known as the birthplace of Roman Emperor **Constantine the Great**. During the short tour, explore the historic **Niš Fortress**, Serbia's largest and best-preserved Turkish military fortress. 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 **taste of southern Serbian cuisine**, we recommend indulging in local specialties such as *ćevapi*, grilled minced meat kebabs, *sarma*, and other regional delights.

Overnight: Niš

Day 6: Southern Serbia Unveiled

Niš - Skull Tower - Mediana - Ljubostinja- Vrnjačka Spa

We begin our journey by heading towards **the Skull Tower**, a haunting monument unlike any other in the world, attracting over 30,000 visitors annually. Built after the 1809 battle for the liberation of Niš, the tower was constructed using **952 human skulls** as a grim warning to those opposing the Ottoman Empire. Today, 59 skulls remain, preserving the chilling legacy of the original structure.

Next, we'll visit **Mediana**, a significant archaeological site from the late Roman period, located in the eastern suburb of Niš. This ancient complex once served as **a luxurious villa for Roman emperors**, offering fascinating insights into the region's history and architecture. Notable for its well-preserved mosaics and remnants of Roman baths, Mediana highlights the grandeur of the Roman Empire in the Balkans.

Our tour leads us to **the Monastery Ljubostinja**, a 14th-century Serbian Orthodox monastery located near the town of Trstenik. Renowned for its beautiful frescoes and tranquil atmosphere, it stands as a testament to Serbia's rich medieval heritage and spiritual devotion.

Later, we will arrive in **Vrnjačka Banja**, one of the oldest spas in Serbia and a proud owner of the “Queen of the Spas” nickname. Unwind and **enjoy the soothing spa facilities at your hotel.**

Overnight: Vrnjačka Banja

Day 7: Monasteries and Mountain Views

Vrnjačka Spa - Žiča Monastery - Šargan Eight - Wooden-Town - Zlatibor Mountain

After hotel check-out, we head to **Žiča Monastery**, known as the “**mother of all churches.**” Located in the historic “Valley of the Kings,” where the Serbian medieval state was founded, Žiča was built in 1221 by the first Serbian king, Stefan Nemanjić the First-Crowned. It played a pivotal role in the independence of the Serbian Church, serving as the seat of Serbian Autocephaly at the beginning of the 13th century.

Next, we will head to **Mokra Gora** to visit the **Šargan Eight Railroad**, a historic narrow-gauge railway that once connected Belgrade and Sarajevo.

EXPERIENCE MORE / Šargan Eight Railroad: *You will truly experience the charm of the mountains and reflect on their beauty while riding the authentic, **retro "Nostalgia" train** along the narrow gauge heritage railway, **Šargan Eight**. This railway, named for its figure-eight shape, takes you from the base of Šargan Mountain and transports you back in time as you enjoy stunning scenery, numerous tunnels, and viaducts. Originally part of the railway from Belgrade to Sarajevo in the early 20th century, the Šargan Eight offers a unique glimpse into the past.*

We continue to the ethno village **Drvengrad** (Wooden-Town), built by the renowned film director Emir Kusturica. The village, constructed from natural materials, primarily wood, features the Mečavnik Hotel, houses, galleries, shops, a cinema, and a church. Since 2008, Drvengrad has hosted the annual **Küstendorf Film and Music Festival** and has welcomed celebrities such as Johnny Depp, Monica Bellucci, Jim Jarmusch, and many others.

After an exquisite wine experience, there will be a short drive to the famous **Zlatibor Mountain**, home of the first royal resort in Serbia, and *check-in* to the mountain hotel. 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 for you.

Overnight: Zlatibor

Day 8: Vivid Western Serbia

Zlatibor Mountain - Gold Gondola - Sirgojno – Stopića Cave - Zlatibor

After breakfast, enjoy a ride on the Zlatibor **Gold Gondola Lift**, the **longest panoramic lift in the world**. Spanning nine kilometers, it takes you from the center of Zlatibor to its highest peak, Tornik, offering stunning views of lush meadows and the tranquil Ribničko Lake. Don't forget your camera to capture the breathtaking scenery, with vistas stretching for hundreds of kilometers across Western Serbia.

After this nature experience, we will head to **Sirogojno**, known for its Old Village (*Staro Selo*) open-air museum and iconic **Sirogojno sweaters** made from raw wool. This interesting complex features traditional homes like the family house, milk house, and bread-making house, offering insight into rural life and mountain culture.

The day concludes with an exciting visit to **Stopića Cave**, offering a unique opportunity to explore **Zlatibor's underground wonders**. The Trnava stream has shaped this river cave, which spans 2,000 meters in length and reaches a height of 50 meters. Visitors can explore several sections, including the Light Hall, Dark Hall, and the Great Hall with pools. While not rich in stalactites, the cave is famed for its striking large tubs, making it one of Eastern Europe's most beautiful caves.

In the evening, an enjoyable dinner of traditional Serbian food typical of the region will be served for you in one of the most popular traditional restaurants in Zlatibor.

EXPERIENCE MORE / Zlatibor Gourmet Session: Discover **the essence of Serbian cuisine** at one of Zlatibor Mountain's finest **traditional kafanas**. Start with rich ajvar and creamy kajmak, paired with artisan-cured meats. Enjoy hearty traditional pies or proja, the beloved Serbian cornbread. For the main course, indulge in succulent veal or freshly caught fish, expertly prepared to bring out **the best local flavours**. Join us for this unforgettable dining experience and try the rich, irresistible flavours of Serbian cuisine against the stunning backdrop of Zlatibor's natural beauty.

Overnight: Zlatibor Mountain

Day 9: "Serbian Tuscany" Delights

Zlatibor - Oplenac - Belgrade

Morning *check-out* and departure from Zlatibor will take you north to the heart of Serbia, where you'll explore **Oplenac**, a place where royals are laid to rest and history comes to life. Here, you'll visit the majestic royal mausoleum and one of the beautiful wineries that mark Serbia's regal heritage.

EXPERIENCE MORE / Šumadija Royal Wines: Delve into **a royal wine journey** through the enchanting Šumadija region, often called **the "Serbian Tuscany"**. At one of Serbia's leading century-old wineries, where natural beauty meets urban elegance, you will taste **three sorts of wine** crafted using traditional recipes. Learn about **the Royal Karađorđević dynasty**, who led Serbia through pivotal moments in its history, founded the modern Serbian state, and greatly influenced its winemaking traditions. Step into the prestigious wine cellar and witness firsthand the meticulous craftsmanship that defines each bottle, gaining a profound appreciation for Serbia's renowned wine-making heritage.

Finally, we'll drive back to Serbia's capital city, **Belgrade**, for hotel *check-in* and a free evening.

Overnight: Belgrade

Day 10: Farewell, Belgrade

Belgrade

After hotel *check-out*, it is time to conclude your Balkan tour. **Transfer to the airport** and end of services.

GENERAL INCLUSIONS

Transportation:

- Private airport arrival and departure transfers
- Private transportation as per the itinerary with modern, comfortable vehicles

Entrances & tickets:

Temple of Saint Sava, Archaeological site Lepenski Vir, Golubac Fortress, Niš Skull Tower, Archeological Park Mediana, Žiža Monastery, Wooden-Town, Gold Gondola Lift, Sirogojno Entrance, Stopića Cave, Oplenac Royal Complex,

Experiences:

Coffee & rakija in a Belgrade tavern (*Serbian Daily Routine*); Sava and Danube Rivers Cruise (*Belgrade Sundown Cruise*); Private Speedboat ride in Tekija (Iron Gates Speedboat Adventure), Wine tasting and lunch in Rajačke Pimnice (*Wines and Flavours of Eastern Serbia*), Train ride tickets on a heritage railway (*Šargan Eight Railroad*), Wine tasting in a local winery in Central Serbia (*Šumadija Royal Wines*); Dinner in a traditional Western Serbian restaurant (*Zlatibor Gourmet Session*);

Meals:

- 9 x breakfast
- 1 x dinner
- Additional meals included in our experiences

Additional:

- Professional private tour guidance throughout the tour
- VAT, accommodation taxes and city taxes
- Tour logistics and organization with dedicated service and care
- 1 bottle of water (0.5l) daily for each passenger

HOTELS:

4 BB in Belgrade in Envoy 4* / Museum 4* / Moskva 4* or similar

1 BB in Kladovo in Aqua Star 4* / Atrijum Apartments or similar

1 BB in Niš in Ambassador Hotel 4* / New City Hotel 4* / Tami Residence 4* or similar

1 BB in Vrnjačka Banja in Hotel Tonanti 4* / Hotel Fontana 4* or similar

2 BB in Zlatibor in Palisad superior 4* / Bor by Karisma 5* / Zlatibor Residence 4* or similar

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