



Custom Tour Proposal Exploring the Balkans

Dates: September 12-22, 2024

Included: 10 nights' accommodation at hotels listed in itinerary¹
2 MEJDI guides for 10 days
Private transportation daily per itinerary
Individual arrival & departure airport transfers
Flights as described in the itinerary²
Meals listed in the itinerary: 10 breakfasts, 9 lunches, 10 dinners
Soft drinks and assorted non-alcoholic beverages at meals
Entrances, sites, activities, and honorariums for speakers
Bottled water on tours & transfers
Gratuities for guides, drivers, hotels and restaurants
US-based customer service representatives

Not included: International airfare
Pre-trip hotel nights (available upon request)
Travel insurance-**HIGHLY RECOMMENDED**
Beer, wine and alcoholic beverages
Single Supplement - \$1,295
Meals not mentioned in the itinerary
Anything not explicitly mentioned in the included section

Pricing: \$6,895 x 8 paying travelers
\$6,395 x 10 paying travelers
\$5,995 x 12 paying travelers

¹ Or similar; double occupancy, including daily breakfast

² Day 3: Belgrade to Sarajevo flight; Day 9: Mostar to Zagreb



Overview

Explore the Land of Blood & Honey in dual perspective, with both a Serbian and a Bosnian guide leading your journey. Experience Belgrade, Serbia's capital and largest city, built on the confluence of the Sava and Danube rivers, holding over 2,000 years of history and conflict within its city limits. Sit down with war refugees for multiple narratives on Belgrade's tumultuous past as well as the history of Yugoslavia. Explore war-torn Sarajevo with a local photojournalist, and hear first-hand stories from Bosnians and Serbs who fought in and survived the wars. Visit Mostar, a medieval town on the banks of the Neretva River, known for its brutal and complex past as well as its picturesque present. Enjoy a light rafting excursion on the river, famous for its unique single arch bridge, a UNESCO Heritage Site and one of the tallest single arch bridges in the world. Fly to Ljubljana and explore the jewel city of Slovenia, including castles, waterways, and unique natural beauty.

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival - Belgrade, Serbia - Thursday, September 12 **[2 Guides, Transfer only]**

Arrive at Belgrade Nikola Tesla Airport. Transfer to your hotel and get settled in. This evening, meet the group for a welcome dinner and orientation.

Hotel: Metropole Palace, Belgrade (Dinner included)

Day 2: Belgrade Old Town - Friday, September 13 **[2 Guides, Transportation]**

This morning, head out on an exploration of Belgrade. Known as the "white city," Belgrade is Serbia's capital and largest city, with historic importance to the Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman, Serbian, and Austrian empires. Tour the Stari grad Municipality (Belgrade Old Town) which holds over 2,000 years of history within its city limits. Stroll Knez-Mihailova Street, the main pedestrian walkway flanked by some of the oldest and most notable buildings in the city. After a break for lunch*, visit the Belgrade Fortress, a unique historical museum, and learn about the civilizations that sought refuge here throughout the ages, from Roman to Austrian occupation. Comprised of the Upper Town, the Lower Town, and Kalemegdan Park, Belgrade Fortress offers unmatched views of the city and its surrounding areas. Visit the National Museum, the city's oldest museum, recently re-opened in 2018 after a 15-year closure. The museum houses an array of exhibits, including a medieval and Byzantine collection, which features icons, frescoes and other objects from Serbian monasteries such as the Unesco-listed 12th century Studenica Monastery. The most



valuable exhibit – inscribed in Unesco’s Memory of the World register – is the illuminated manuscript of Miroslav’s Gospel, one of the oldest surviving examples of Cyrillic script.

This evening, sit down with a local journalist and discuss how the vestiges of Belgrade’s war-torn past are shaping its current political and socio-economic situation. Continue the conversation over dinner.

**Sample the local cuisine on a tasting tour experience for lunch.*

Hotel: Metropole Hotel, Belgrade (Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner included)

Day 3: The History of Yugoslavia - Saturday, September 14 **[2 Guides, Transportation]**

Today, explore the vast and complex history of Yugoslavia, starting with the picturesque red-roofed village of Zemun part of the Habsburg (Austrian) Monarchy, and now a neighborhood of Belgrade that maintains its unique small-town feel and a spirit of antiquity. Visit one of the WWII memorials in the area and learn about the formation of Yugoslavia. Then continue to the Museum of Yugoslavia. Trace the Kingdom of Yugoslavia through Socialist Yugoslavia as well as the life of former president, revolutionary, and statesman, Josip Broz Tito. Visit Tito’s grave, housed within the museum complex. You will see remains from the NATO bombing and hear about the Serbs’ view on these events. Sit down with a refugee from the Yugoslav wars and hear their first-hand accounts of Serbia’s tumultuous and not-so-distant past.

Hotel: Metropole Hotel, Belgrade (Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner included)

Day 4: Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina - Sunday, September 15 **[2 Guides, Transportation]**

This morning, meet with an expert on the Serbian Revolution to learn about the overthrow of Slobodan Milošević. Then, transfer to the airport for your flight to Sarajevo. Upon arrival in Sarajevo, visit the tunnel dug during the war that was used to evacuate the wounded and provide supplies to the city. We will continue to Sarajevo for a walking tour through the old city, visiting the Ottoman and Austrian areas that make Sarajevo such a unique and eclectic city. Throughout its thousand-year history, it has experienced countless moments of significance, including holding the infamous record for time occupied under siege. Sarajevo is also where the First World War began with the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand. Euphemistically called the European Jerusalem, it has proudly preserved its unique mixture of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. There are very few cities in the world where within 500 meters, you can find a Catholic Church, a synagogue, a mosque, and an



orthodox church. In the evening, sit down for a presentation by Ziyah Gafic, a bosnian photojournalist, about life in Bosnia and Herzegovina after the war.

Hotel: Hotel Swissotel, Sarajevo (Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner included)

Day 5: Sarajevo, Then and Now - Monday, September 16
[2 Guides, Transportation]

This morning, visit the ancient Jewish Cemetery, which served as the frontline during the war in 1992. Engage in an exclusive meeting with General Jovan Divjak, a Serbian general who fought on the side of the Bosnians in the war. Learn about his involvement in the war and about his work today through Education Builds Bosnia, an organization that supports the educational development of children orphaned by the Bosnia and Herzegovina war. After lunch, take a gondola up the mountains for a picturesque overview of Sarajevo and the remains of the bobsled used in the 1984 Olympics. Over drinks this afternoon, learn about Bosnia and Herzegovina current affairs, politics, divisions and solutions. Tonight, meet with a local Sufi for an opportunity to learn about their community and culture. Later, enjoy dinner together.

**Add a classical performance or contemporary live music out at a local venue.*

Hotel: Hotel Swissotel, Sarajevo (Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner included)

Day 6: Remembering a Troubled Past - Tuesday, September 17
[2 Guides, Transportation]

Continue exploring Sarajevo today, with a trip to the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Founded in 1888, the museum is the country's largest and most endowed collection of ancient and natural history. Meet with one of the Museum curators, and tour the museum which houses an impressive collection of Greek pottery and Roman mosaics, as well as its most notable piece, the Sarajevo Haggadah, an illuminated manuscript that contains the illustrated traditional text of the Passover Haggadah which accompanies the Passover Seder. One of the oldest Sephardic Haggadahs in the world, the piece originated in Barcelona around 1350. View this cherished display with the museum's curator, before sitting down to lunch at a local restaurant. Later we continue to see an exhibit about the Srebrenica massacre followed by a sit down with Hasan Nuhanovic, one of the curators of the Srebrenica Genocide Memorial, who lost his family in the genocide. Over drinks this evening, meet with a descendant of Josip Broz Tito, former President of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia or an expert on Tito's era. Spend the remainder of the evening at leisure.

Hotel: Hotel Swissotel, Sarajevo (Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner included)



Day 7: The City of Mostar - Wednesday, September 18

[2 Guides, Transportation]

Today, we leave Sarajevo behind and head towards Herzegovina and the city of Mostar. On the way, we make a stop in Konjic, a beautiful town known for its once top-secret bunker, beautifully preserved, and built to be the last line of defense in the event of a nuclear attack. After lunch, head for Mostar on the banks of the Neretva River, where you will tour the historic old city. Mostar is known for its unique single arch bridge, a UNESCO Heritage Site and one of the tallest single arch bridges in the world. A traditionally mixed city (Christian Orthodox, Catholics, and Muslims), Mostar faced a brutal war between former neighbors, and is one of the few places where literally everyone was fighting everyone. Visit a local mosque and climb up the minaret for a spectacular view of the city. Over dinner this evening, sit down with a local resident impacted by the war, to hear about how families were divided throughout the war.

Hotel: Hotel Mepas, Mostar (Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner included)

Day 8: Neretva River Rafting & Waterfall - Thursday, September 19

[2 Guides, Transportation]

This morning, either enjoy some free time, or join us on a light 2 hour rafting trip (good for beginners), where we will get to see the old bridge from the river, afterwards visit a famous sufi shrine in the outskirts of Mostar. Then, continue as a group to lunch and **private tasting at a nearby winery**. After lunch, visit the country's famous Kravice Waterfall. After dinner, enjoy an evening at your leisure

Hotel: Hotel Mepas, Mostar (Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner included)

Day 9: Arrival to Ljubljana, Slovenia - Friday, September 20

[2 Guides, Transportation]

Fly from Mostar to Zagreb, drive to Ljubljana. ***Flight at variable times, likely early in the morning.***

Old town tour of Ljubljana in afternoon/evening to see unique attractions of its main squares and to learn the history of communism in Slovenia and eventual independence from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Overnight: Grand Hotel, Ljubljana (Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner included)



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Day 10: Natural Beauty in Bled - Saturday, September 21 **[2 Guides, Transportation]**

Remaining highlights in Ljubljana if later arrival time on Day 9.

Spend the day around Bled, making visits to its cathedral and castle. Meet a local official or journalist for a conversation on current events and politics, then continue towards Bohinj lake to ride the gondola up to the National Park peaks. After descending, take a boat tour of the Bohinj lake before returning to conclude the tour with a festive farewell dinner in Ljubljana.

Overnight: Grand Hotel, Ljubljana (Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner included)

Day 11: Departure - Sunday, September 22 **[Transfer only]**

Transfer to the airport for your departing flights.

Overnight: N/A (Breakfast included)