



# MEJDI TOURS

## Exploring the Balkans: Land of Blood & Honey

(Scheduled Departure)

### Dates & Pricing:

June 10 - 20, 2026 (\$5,285 per person, + \$1,390 single room supplement)

September 9 - 19, 2026 (\$5,285 per person, + \$1,390 single room supplement)

June 9 - 19, 2027 (\$5,550 per person, + \$1,390 single room supplement)

September 8 - 18, 2027 (\$5,550 per person, + \$1,390 single room supplement)

\*Extension tour in Albania available per request

### Included:

- 10 nights' accommodation at hotels per itinerary
- 1 MEJDI-Trained guide for 7 days
- 2 MEJDI-Trained guides for 2 days
- 8 days of private bus transportation
- Domestic flight (Belgrade-Sarajevo)
- Meals listed in the itinerary: 10 breakfasts, 7 lunches, 4 dinners
- Entrances, sites, and honorariums for speakers
- Water on the bus throughout the tour
- US-based customer service representatives

### Not included:

- International airfare
- Travel insurance-highly recommended
- Single Supplement
- Meals and drinks not mentioned in the itinerary
- Arrival/departure airport transfers
- Gratuities
- Anything not explicitly mentioned in the included section



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## Overview:

This thoughtfully curated journey across the **Balkans** explores the layered history, cultural diversity, and dynamic present of four nations: **Serbia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, and Montenegro**. Blending **MEJDI's signature dual narrative approach** with immersive, community-based travel, the itinerary brings together voices from across divides—historical, ethnic, and generational.

Walk the cobbled streets of **Sarajevo** and **Dubrovnik** with local guides offering **multiple perspectives**. Learn to cook with a **Herzegovinian chef in Mostar**, float across **Montenegro's Bay of Kotor**, and join in **live folk music** on the Adriatic coast. Through meaningful encounters—with artists, activists, artisans, faith leaders, and survivors of conflict—this journey invites travelers to engage deeply with the region's past while celebrating its resilience and cultural vibrancy.

## Highlights:

- Explore Sarajevo with **two guides** offering diverse perspectives providing a deeper understanding of the city's complex past and multiethnic present.
- Hear firsthand accounts from someone **displaced during the Yugoslav Wars**, gaining insight into post-conflict reconciliation and memory.
- Engage in a conversation about **Jewish life in Bosnia** before, during, and after the war—from Sephardic traditions to contemporary challenges of identity and remembrance.
- Discover the role of spirituality and mysticism in Bosnian society through an intimate conversation with a **local Sufi**, highlighting interfaith coexistence.
- Taste Bosnia's **diverse culinary heritage** on a tour led by locals blending storytelling, migration history, and regional identity.
- Learn about the 1995 genocide through **personal testimony** from a **memorial curator** who lost family members in the massacre.
- Hear a **Croat perspective** on **Mostar's divided history**, its symbolic bridge, and current efforts at reconciliation and unity.



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- Explore the power of **visual storytelling** and memory at **War Photo LTD**, and hear directly from the gallery's founder about photographing conflict zones.
- Connect with **local silversmiths and mosaic artists** working to preserve Montenegro's traditional crafts in a rapidly changing cultural landscape.
- Experience a lively, local dinner with **traditional Balkan music**—an artistic form that weaves together memory, identity, and celebration across generations.

## Itinerary:

### Day 1: Arrival - Belgrade, Serbia (1 Guide, No Bus)

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

*Hotel: Mama Shelter hotel, Belgrade, Serbia (Dinner included)*

### Day 2: Belgrade Old Town (1 Guide, No Transportation - Walking Tour)

This morning, set out on an exploration of **Belgrade**. Known as the “**white city**,” **Serbia's capital** has been a critical crossroads for empires—from the Romans and Byzantines to the Ottomans and Austrians. Begin in the **Stari Grad (Old Town)**, where more than 2,000 years of history converge. Stroll Knez Mihailova Street, the city's central pedestrian boulevard lined with iconic 19th-century architecture.

Continue to **Belgrade Fortress** and **Kalemegdan Park**, an expansive complex offering sweeping views over the confluence of the Danube and Sava Rivers. Visit **Despot's Gate, Sahat Tower**, and the iconic **Victor Monument**, and hear stories of the people who once took refuge within these fortified walls.

After lunch in a traditional kafana, transition into **Skadarlija, Belgrade's bohemian quarter** long associated with artists, writers, and musicians. Enjoy **coffee and conversation with a local painter or curator** (at a gallery).

Wrap up the day in conversation with a **local journalist** on the impact of Belgrade's past conflicts on its present political and socio-economic landscape.

*Hotel: Mama Shelter hotel, Belgrade, Serbia (Breakfast included)*



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## Day 3: The History of Yugoslavia (2 Guides, Private 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. Get to see some of the remains from the Nato bombing and hear about the Serbs view on the bombing.

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: Mama Shelter hotel, Belgrade, Serbia (Breakfast and Lunch included)*

## Day 4: Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina (2 Guides, Private Transportation)

**This morning, transfer to the airport for your flight to Sarajevo.**

Accompanying you throughout the day is your **MEJDI guide from Serbia**, who will provide historical and regional context as you cross from one part of the former Yugoslavia into another. Upon arrival in Sarajevo, you'll be joined by a **second local guide**, offering insight from within Bosnia and Herzegovina—allowing for a truly **dual narrative experience** that honors the complex, often contrasting perspectives of the region's past and present.

Begin with a visit to the **War Tunnel Museum**, a powerful symbol of Sarajevo's resilience during the 1,425-day siege in the 1990s. Walk through a preserved section of the tunnel and hear personal and community stories from both guides—illuminating how people on opposite sides of the conflict experienced the war.

Next, embark on a **food tour with Balkantina**, a local culinary storytelling collective. As you taste iconic Bosnian dishes—from *ćevapi* and *somun* bread to sweet *tufahija*—your guides will narrate how war, migration, and empire have shaped Sarajevo's culinary and cultural identity.



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Explore the historic districts of **Ottoman Baščaršija** and the **Austro-Hungarian quarter**, where mosques, synagogues, and churches stand just blocks apart. Through the lens of both guides, gain a deeper understanding of the city's layered memory and its ongoing efforts toward coexistence.

Enjoy a free evening.

*Hotel: Colors Inn Sarajevo, Bosnia (Breakfast and Lunch included)*

## **Day 5: Sarajevo, Then and Now (1 Guide, No Transportation - Walking Tour)**

**This morning**, begin with a visit to Sarajevo's **ancient Jewish Cemetery**, one of the oldest in Europe and a poignant symbol of the city's layered history. Perched on the hillside, this site also served as a front line during the siege of Sarajevo in the 1990s.

Following your visit, **engage in a conversation with a Jewish community member**—a scholar, activist, or descendant of Sarajevo's once-vibrant Sephardic population. Learn about Jewish life in Bosnia before, during, and after the war, and how the community continues to navigate identity, memory, and resilience in a changing society.

Continue with an **exclusive meeting with a survivor of the Serbian-Bosnian war**, who will share firsthand reflections on the conflict and how their personal experience has shaped their ongoing work in peacebuilding or civil society.

After lunch, take Sarajevo's scenic **gondola up to Mount Trebević**, where you'll enjoy panoramic views over the city. Walk among the haunting remains of the 1984 Winter Olympics bobsled track—now a graffiti-covered symbol of both Sarajevo's international past and its war-torn years.

**This evening**, meet with a **local Sufi practitioner** for an intimate conversation about Sufi beliefs, practices, and the role of spirituality in everyday life. Learn how this mystical Islamic tradition continues to play a vital role in Bosnia's cultural and religious mosaic.

*Hotel: Colors Inn Sarajevo, Bosnia (Breakfast included)*

## **Day 6: Remembering a Troubled Past (1 Guide, Private Transportation)**

Continue exploring Sarajevo today, with a trip to the **National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina**, the country's largest and most endowed collection of ancient and natural history. **Meet with one of the Museum curators**, and tour the museum



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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.

Later we continue to see an **exhibit about the Srebrenica massacre** followed by a sit down with **one of the curators of the Srebrenica Genocide Memorial**, who lost his family in the genocide.

Spend the remainder of the evening at leisure.

*Hotel: Colors Inn Sarajevo, Bosnia (Breakfast included)*

## **Day 7: The City of Mostar (1 Guide, Private Transportation)**

This morning, **depart Sarajevo** and journey south into the **Herzegovina region**, following the route along dramatic mountain landscapes and the turquoise Neretva River.

Stop in the town of **Konjic** for a brief visit to its elegant **Ottoman-era stone bridge**, which spans the Neretva and has stood as a symbol of unity and connection across centuries. For those interested, there's an opportunity to visit **Tito's once-secret atomic bunker**—a massive underground complex built during the Cold War to shelter Yugoslavia's leadership in the event of nuclear war.

Continue onward to **Mostar**, a city known for both its physical beauty and the deep scars left by the Bosnian War. Upon arrival, set out on a guided walk through **Mostar's Old City**, with cobblestone streets, Ottoman-era architecture, and artisan shops. Visit a historic mosque, climb the minaret for sweeping views over the red-roofed cityscape and the famous **Stari Most** bridge, a powerful symbol of both destruction and reconstruction.

**This evening**, engage in a private **conversation with a member of Mostar's Croat community**, offering insight into Croatian identity in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Hear their perspective on the city's divided past and ongoing reconciliation efforts, and reflect on how ethnic, national, and religious identities continue to shape Mostar's social fabric today.

*Hotel: Pasha hotel, Mostar, Bosnia (Breakfast and Lunch included)*



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## Day 8: Dubrovnik, Croatia (1 Guide, Private Transportation)

This morning, transfer to **Dubrovnik**, one of the most popular destinations on the Mediterranean, and for good reason. A prominent port, the city was listed as a **UNESCO World Heritage** Site in 1979.

The **walled Old City** is well known for its medieval history, brutal siege in the war in the early 90's, and more recently, the extensive renovation that returned Dubrovnik to its former glory. Today, Dubrovnik has captured the world's attention as a filming location for the hit television drama, *Game of Thrones*.

**Enjoy a walking tour of the old city**, taking in both the history and natural beauty that defines Dubrovnik.

After lunch in Dubrovnik, continue visiting the highlights of the city, and end at the **war museum**, where you will **meet with a renowned international photojournalist** who owns the gallery, **War Photo LTD**, and learn about his work and life.

*Hotel: Lero hotel, Dubrovnik, Croatia (Breakfast and Lunch included)*

## Day 9: Kotor, Montenegro (1 Guide, Private Transportation)

Cross into **Montenegro** and travel along the winding **Adriatic coastline** to the picturesque Bay of **Kotor**.

Delve into the fortified medieval **Old Town of Kotor**, a **UNESCO World Heritage site** known for its well-preserved Venetian walls and winding alleyways.

Meet with **local artisans** who continue centuries-old traditions in **silversmithing and mosaic art**.

After lunch, embark on a **boat tour** to the famous **island church** of **Our Lady of the Rocks**, steeped in local legend and maritime history. Continue by boat to the stunning **Blue Cave**, a natural wonder where the sunlight illuminates the sea in glowing shades of turquoise—swimming is optional, depending on sea conditions.

*Hotel: Monte Cristo hotel, Kotor, Montenegro (Breakfast included)*

## Day 10: Budva & the Adriatic Riviera (1 Guide, Private Transportation)

Spend a leisurely day exploring **Montenegro's Adriatic coastline** with a visit to the



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vibrant town of **Budva**. Known for its historic **Old Town** encircled by Venetian walls and its sparkling beaches, Budva offers a more relaxed pace and coastal charm.

Stroll through the stone streets, explore churches and artisan boutiques, or opt for free time at the beach.

Afterward, head up to **Fort Mogren**, a little-known fortification that offers stunning panoramic views of the Budva Riviera and surrounding mountains. Learn about its history and significance during the era of Venetian rule.

Enjoy lunch along the waterfront and take in the panoramic views of the Budva Riviera from a nearby overlook.

Return to Kotor in the late afternoon and hear **live folk music** during dinner.

*Hotel: Monte Cristo hotel, Kotor, Montenegro (Breakfast and Dinner included)*

## **Day 11: Departure (No Guide, No Transportation)**

Check out and transfer to the airport for your flight home.

*(Breakfast included)*