



MEJDI TOURS

Exploring the Balkans: Land of Blood & Honey

(Scheduled Departure)

Dates & Pricing:

September 9 - 19, 2026 (\$5,435 per person, + \$1,390 single room supplement)
Albania Extension Tour: September 19 - 22, 2026 (\$1,530 per person, +\$170 single sup.)

June 9 - 19, 2027 (\$5,700 per person, + \$1,390 single room supplement)
Albania Extension Tour: June 19 - 22, 2026 (\$1,605 per person, +\$185 single sup.)

September 8 - 18, 2027 (\$5,700 per person, + \$1,390 single room supplement)
Albania Extension Tour: September 18 - 21, 2026 (\$1,605 per person, +\$185 single sup.)

**Extension tour has a minimum of 4 travelers*

Included:

- 10 nights' accommodation at premium hotels per itinerary
- 1 MEJDI-Trained guide for 8 days
- 2 MEJDI-Trained guides for 2 days
- 7 days of private bus transportation
- Domestic flight (Belgrade-Sarajevo)
- Meals listed in the itinerary: 10 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 2 dinners
- Entrances, sites, and honorariums for speakers
- Water on the bus throughout the tour
- Dedicated pre-trip traveler services and 24/7 on-ground support

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:

Journey across the Balkans, uncovering the layered history, cultural diversity, and present realities of four nations: Serbia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, and Montenegro. Blending MEJDI's signature "Dual Narrative" approach with immersive, community-based travel, this itinerary brings together voices from across historical, ethnic, religious and generational divides. Walk the cobble streets of Sarajevo and Dubrovnik, learn to cook with a Herzegovinian chef in Mostar, float across Montenegro's Bay of Kotor, and hear live folk music on the Adriatic coast. Meet artists and activists, artisans, faith leaders, and survivors of conflict, all inviting travelers to engage deeply with the region's past while celebrating its resilience.

Highlights:

- Explore Sarajevo with two guides offering diverse perspectives on the city's complex past and multiethnic present.
- Hear firsthand accounts of those displaced during the Yugoslav Wars
- Engage in a conversation about Sephardic Jewish heritage in Bosnia
- Discover the role of spirituality and mysticism in Bosnian society through conversation with a local Sufi
- Sample Bosnia's diverse culinary heritage on a tour led by local foodies
- Learn about the disastrous violence of 1995 through personal testimony
- Gather a Croat perspective on conflict and reconciliation in Mostar
- Explore the power of visual storytelling and conflict photography at War Photo LTD
- Connect with local silversmiths and mosaic artists working to preserve Montenegro's traditional crafts
- Experience a lively, local dinner with traditional Balkan music



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Itinerary

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

Arrive in Belgrade and transfer to your hotel. Meet the group for a welcome dinner and brief orientation in the evening.

Hotel: Mama Shelter hotel, Belgrade, Serbia (dinner included)

Day 2: The Capital of Yugoslavia (1 Guide, Transportation)

Explore the **golden age of Yugoslavia** in Belgrade in a journey through a "concrete utopia," where the city's landscape still reflects the ambitious social experiment of the 20th century. This era is best understood as a "Third Way"—a unique form of socialism that sought to balance Eastern ideology with Western openness, leaving behind a legacy of monumental architecture and complex nostalgia.

Visit **Novi Beograd**, a neighborhood built from scratch on former swampland starting in 1948, this district was designed as the ideal socialist capital. Its vast boulevards and "blocks" (blokovi) represent a grand vision of collective living, where residential units were integrated with schools, parks, and cultural centers.

Witness the period's architectural confidence - **Iconic Brutalism** - at sites like the **Genex Tower** (Western City Gate), with its futuristic revolving restaurant, and other modernist masterpieces. Make a visit to the famous Blocks of the new city, housing thousands of people in a modern, minimalistic way. At the **Museum of Yugoslavia**, explore exhibits tracing the evolution from the Kingdom to the socialist state and consider the legacy of Josip Broz Tito.

The tour will be done in a **classic 1970's original Yugoslav Zastava car**.

Later, discuss how Belgrade's past conflicts continue to shape its political and socio-economic reality with a **local journalist**, and how demographic decline, migration and life after socialism are affecting Serbian society.

Hotel: Mama Shelter hotel, Belgrade, Serbia (breakfast included)



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Day 3: The History of Yugoslavia (2 Guides, Private Transportation)

Begin the day with a walk through the **Stari Grad (Old Town)** and along **Knez Mihailova Street**, then continue to **Belgrade Fortress and Kalemegdan Park** for views over the Danube and Sava Rivers. Visit landmarks including the **Despot's Gate**, **Sahat Tower**, and the **Victor Monument** to absorb the city's ancient origins. Next, cross the river to **Zemun**, a well-preserved village once part of the Habsburg Monarchy, now a Belgrade neighborhood known for its small-town charm and winding cobblestone streets. Break here for a leisurely **lunch at a traditional riverside restaurant** along the Danube Quay. Afterward, move back toward the city center to visit a local **WWII memorial** to learn about the war's impact in this part of Europe, before marveling at the golden mosaics inside the monumental **Church of Saint Sava**. Continue onward to see **remnants from the NATO bombing**, viewing the preserved ruins of the Ministry of Defence while hearing multiple perspectives on key moments in the Yugoslav Wars - and the Kosovo part. Finally, return to the Old Town, concluding the day in **conversation with a refugee of conflict**, reflecting on stories of resilience.

Hotel: Mama Shelter hotel, Belgrade, Serbia (breakfast and lunch included)

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

Fly to Sarajevo in the morning, where **two guides - one Serbian, one Bosnian - present a dual narrative tour highlighting the complex history of the region**. Visit key landmarks including **the War Tunnel Museum**, where a preserved section of this underground recalls Sarajevo's survival during the 1425-day siege. Take a food tour for lunch, sampling dishes like ćevapi, somun bread, and tufahija, while exploring how history, empire, and migration have shaped Sarajevo's culinary identity. **Walk through the Baščaršija and Austro-Hungarian quarters**, where diverse religious landmarks stand side by side, offering insight into the city's layered past and pursuit of coexistence.

Hotel: Colors Inn Sarajevo, Bosnia (breakfast and lunch included)

Day 5: Communities & Symbols (1 Guide, No Transportation - Walking Tour)

Visit Sarajevo's ancient Jewish Cemetery, a site reflecting both the city's multicultural heritage and conditions on the front lines during the 1990s siege. **Hear from a member of the Jewish community about Sephardic heritage in Sarajevo and meet a peacebuilder who survived the Serbian-Bosnian war**. After lunch, ride the



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gondola to Mount Trebević for sweeping views, and walk along the abandoned Olympic bobsled track, a powerful symbol of the city's past. In the evening, join a local Sufi practitioner for an intimate conversation on mysticism, spirituality, and the continuing presence of Sufism in Bosnia's religious and cultural life.

Hotel: Colors Inn Sarajevo, Bosnia (breakfast included)

Day 6: Remembrance and Memorial (1 Guide, Private Transportation)

Head to the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, home to the country's most extensive collection of ancient and natural history, for a curated tour of artifacts such as Greek pottery, Roman mosaics, and the **renowned Sarajevo Haggadah, a 14th-century illuminated Sephardic manuscript**. See an exhibit on the Srebrenica massacre then engage in a discussion with an **expert from the Srebrenica Genocide Memorial**. The afternoon and evening offer time for further exploration of Sarajevo at leisure.

Hotel: Colors Inn Sarajevo, Bosnia (breakfast included)

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

Depart Sarajevo, traveling south along a scenic route through Herzegovina's dramatic mountain terrain above the Neretva River. Stop in **Konjic** to view its elegant Ottoman-era stone bridge and descend to **Tito's atomic bunker (optional)**, a Cold War-era underground complex to discuss the cold war period and Tito's role in Nonalignment

Continue to the Old City of Mostar, with its cobblestone streets, Ottoman architecture, and artisan shops. Climb the minaret of an historic mosque for panoramic views of the Stari Most, a bridge destroyed during the war and later rebuilt as a symbol of reconciliation. In the evening, **meet with a panel of 2 speakers: a member of the local Croat community and a member of the Bosniak Muslim community, to hear reflections on identity, division**, and the ongoing challenges of coexistence in post-war Bosnia.

Hotel: Pasha hotel, Mostar, Bosnia (breakfast and lunch included)



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Day 8: Walls of Dubrovnik (1 Guide, Private Transportation)

Travel south to Dubrovnik, one of the Adriatic's most celebrated cities and a place where questions of memory, identity, and preservation are visible at every turn. Though best known today for its medieval walls and stunning coastline, Dubrovnik also carries the legacy of the 1991–1992 siege, when the city came under attack during the breakup of Yugoslavia.

Begin with a walking tour through the UNESCO-listed Old Town, exploring how Dubrovnik evolved from an independent maritime republic into one of Europe's most visited destinations. As you walk along the limestone streets and fortified walls, discuss the city's remarkable post-war reconstruction efforts and the challenges of preserving cultural heritage in the face of mass tourism.

After lunch, **meet with a local journalist, historian, or urban development expert** to examine the opportunities and tensions created by Dubrovnik's tourism economy. Topics include overtourism, housing affordability, demographic change, and the impact of global media on local communities.

Continue to **War Photo Limited**, where a renowned photojournalist shares personal experiences documenting conflict in the Balkans and around the world. Through powerful imagery and conversation, reflect on the role of journalism, the ethics of witnessing, and the ways visual storytelling shapes public understanding of war.

Hotel: Lero hotel, Dubrovnik, Croatia (breakfast included)

Day 9: Welcome to Montenegro (1 Guide, Private Transportation)

Cross into Montenegro, journeying along the scenic Adriatic coastline to the breathtaking Bay of Kotor. Explore the fortified medieval Old Town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site known for its Venetian architecture and narrow stone alleyways. **Meet local artisans who preserve traditional crafts such as silversmithing and mosaic art** and take a **boat tour** to the island church of Our Lady of the Rocks. Continue to the Blue Cave, where sunlight transforms the water into brilliant shades of turquoise. Later, **meet a civil society leader/journalist** to discuss life in Montenegro post-Yugoslavia.

Hotel: Monte Cristo hotel, Kotor, Montenegro (breakfast included)



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Day 10: Adriatic Coast & Riviera (1 Guide, Private Transportation)

Spend a relaxed day along Montenegro's Adriatic coast with a visit to the lively town of Budva, known for its Venetian-walled Old Town, charming churches, and sandy beaches. Explore the historic center or unwind by the sea, and head to a **cooking class hosted by locals**, where you will get to eat what you've made for lunch.

Continue to **Fort Mogren**, a lesser-known hilltop fortification offering views of the Budva Riviera and insight into the area's Venetian-era defenses. Return to Kotor in the afternoon, concluding the trip with a festive farewell dinner accompanied by live folk music.

Hotel: Monte Cristo hotel, Kotor, Montenegro (breakfast, lunch and dinner included)

Day 11: Departure (No Guide, No Transportation)

Check out and transfer to the airport for departing flights.

(breakfast included)



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Optional Extension

Albania

Included: 3 nights' accommodation at the following hotels or similar:

- Golden Palace, Shkodra
- Elisa by Melia, Tirana

1 English Speaking guide for 4 days

Meals listed in the itinerary: 2 breakfasts, 1 dinner

Private transportation throughout the trip, including one group

Private departure airport transfer

Entrance fees and site visits

Water on bus throughout tour

Dedicated pre-trip traveler services and 24/7 on-ground support

Not

included: International airfare

Travel insurance - highly recommended

Single occupancy supplement

Meals not mentioned in the itinerary

Customary tips for drivers and guides

Porterage fees and gratuities at hotels

Individual airport transfers outside of the group transfer

Anything not explicitly mentioned in the included section



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Itinerary

Day 1: Kotor -Transfer to Shkodra, Albania (1 Guide, Private Transportation)

Depart Montenegro and cross into northern Albania.

Upon arrival in Shkodër, one of Albania's most historic and culturally significant cities, explore its unique role as a crossroads of faiths, empires, and national identity. Have lunch near the **Shiroka lake**, and head to visit **Rozafa Castle**, dramatically positioned above the confluence of rivers and long associated with Albanian legend and resilience. Continue through the city center, where mosques, churches, and civic spaces reflect Albania's tradition of religious coexistence.

Visit the **Marubi Museum of Photography**, whose extraordinary collection offers a visual history of Albania and the Balkans from the late nineteenth century to the present. Check in to the hotel and enjoy a free evening.

Hotel: Golden Palace, Shkodra, Albania (no meals included)

Day 2: To Kosovo (1 Guide, Private Transportation)

After breakfast, travel through northern Albania to an **agritourism initiative** and a model for sustainable rural development. The farm works closely with local farmers and producers, helping preserve traditional agricultural practices while creating new economic opportunities in the region. Meet members of the team to learn how food, entrepreneurship, and community revitalization are reshaping rural Albania before enjoying a farm-to-table lunch showcasing local ingredients and culinary traditions.

In the afternoon, continue into Kosovo and arrive in **Prizren**, widely considered the cultural capital of the country. Explore the city's beautifully preserved **Ottoman quarter**, crossing the iconic Stone Bridge and walking through Shadervan Square, the lively heart of Prizren. Visit the **Sinan Pasha Mosque** for its historic architecture lining the Bistrica River, and ascend to the medieval Prizren Fortress for panoramic views over the city and surrounding mountains. Throughout the visit, discuss how Albanian, Turkish, Bosniak, and Serbian communities have shaped the city's identity over centuries. In the evening, meet a local family who experienced the Kosovo War, reflecting on memory, resilience, and the challenges of rebuilding communities after conflict. This intimate encounter provides a human dimension to the history and politics of the region.

Hotel: Prizren, Albania (Breakfast included)



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Day 3: Tirana (1 Guide, Private Transportation)

After breakfast, depart for **Tirana**. Upon arrival in Albania's vibrant capital, explore **Skanderbeg Square** and the city's evolving urban landscape, where Ottoman, Italian, communist, and contemporary influences intersect. Discuss Albania's remarkable transformation since the fall of communism, its aspirations for European integration, and the social and cultural changes shaping the country today. Conclude the extension with a farewell dinner celebrating the journey through the Balkans and the many perspectives encountered along the way.

Hotel: Elisa by Melia, Tirana, Albania (Breakfast and Dinner included)

Day 4. Departure

This morning, check out of your hotel and transfer to the airport for your flight home.

(Breakfast included)