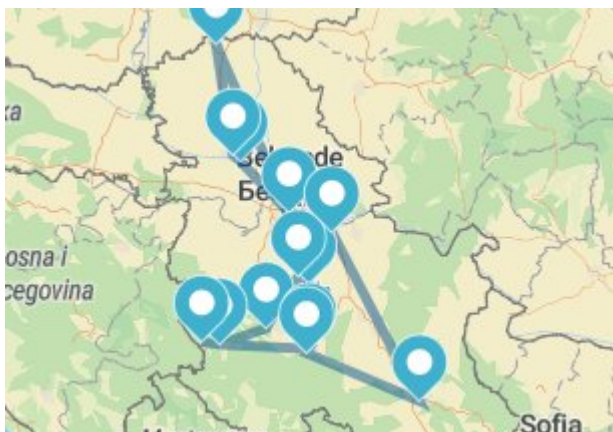


Learn about the incredible history of Serbia through its cities and monuments

From the capital the exciting "Balkan Route" unfolds, a unique opportunity to get to know the incredible history of Serbia through its main cities and magnificent monuments. Located in the heart of the Balkans, these ancient lands have been influenced by different peoples, who have each contributed to a fascinating culture and traditions. Serbia harbours wonderful treasures inside its historic monasteries, proud fortresses and impregnable castles. Feel the contrast between tradition and modernity in Belgrade; the Central European influence in Novi Sad; the spiritual and cultural character of Sremski Karlovci. This comprehensive trip will allow you to visit many places: from the fascinating art nouveau universe of Subotica, the disturbing image of the "Tower of the Caravels" of Niš, or the charm of the Topola wine country, where Oplenac hill, with its monumental ensemble of great beauty, comprising the church of St. George and the Mausoleum of the Karadjordjevic dynasty, is not to be missed... For centuries Serbia found itself on the border with the East - where the Austro-Hungarian Empire ended and the Ottoman Empire began. A visit to the country helps the traveler to understand not only the country's history, but also the future of Europe. And along the Route the traveller will encounter the fabled friendliness of the people and renowned monuments, such as the legendary fortresses of Kalemegdan, Petrovaradin and Maglic and magnificent monasteries such as those of Žica and Studenica ... Wonderful cuisine and the beautiful Balkan natural environment, with its wide plains, mountains covered with monasteries, picturesque vineyards and dense forests, will accompany you all the way. "Srećan put"! Have a good trip.



Departures:

from January 2021 till December 2021

Destinations:

Belgrade, Sremski Karlovci, Novi Sad, Subotica, Topola, Arandelovac, Ovčar, Branešci, Mokra Gora, Kraljevo, Žica, Nis and Smederevo.

Categories:

Cultural and Over 55s.

Day 1: City of origin - Belgrade

Flight departure from the city of origin to Belgrade. Arrival, rental vehicle pick-up and arrival in Serbia's capital city. You have the day free to enjoy this magnificent city. This young and vibrant city's many attractions will dazzle the most experienced traveler. Its unique mixture of tradition and modernity, its style, which mixes Eastern influences with European sophistication, its multiculturalism, its intense cultural and artistic life, its delicious cuisine, its always interesting nightlife... Belgrade also offers excellent value for money and still an inexpensive city, compared to the major European capitals. Belgrade, which has not been overwhelmed by tourists, is continuously reinventing itself as it evolves into one of the most interesting cities in Europe. The passage of the centuries and the cultural mixing have shaped the character of this city located between the banks of the Danube and the Sava rivers, which meander around its most symbolic building: the Kalemegdan Fortress. The ideal place to enjoy pleasant walks with great views, this imposing fortress witnessed the battles of Romans, Turks, Austrians and Serbs, different peoples and cultures, which wandered the drawbridges, tunnels and recesses of Kalemegdan. (Note: History lovers should head to the viewpoint over the rivers. From this point, we can observe the site of the opening battle of the First World War between the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Serbia, which was accused of being complicit in the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo. In the fortress several museums can be visited. Admission not included). You can choose whether to end the day enjoying a dinner with live music in the bohemian neighborhood of Skadarlija. Dotted with picturesque houses, the traveller's can let his imagination take wing in its historic cafes with history and enjoy romantic views from the boats on the river bank. Any recommendation for dinner? From the elegant "Kalemegdan Terasa", located inside the emblematic fortress and whose terraces provide magnificent views of the city to the cosmopolitan "Zaplet", which usually hosts local celebrity diners. The "Bahus", located on the banks of the Danube, allows you to enjoy dishes, which combine traditional recipes and new Serbian cuisine. Overnight stay in Belgrade.

Day 2: Belgrade and its surroundings

The "White City", which is the meaning of Belgrade, is located at a strategic crossroads of river highways, between the Danube and its main tributary (the Yugoslav Sava), which ends its journey in the heart of Serbia after crossing the beautiful capitals of Croatia and Slovenia. A privileged location, which gives the city a special charm. Today we will spend the day getting to know Belgrade well. Considered one of the oldest cities on the continent, the capital of the country was founded by Celtic tribes and later conquered by the Romans, who turned these lands into the military frontier between the Roman Empire and the barbarian peoples of Central Europe. Strolling through the streets of Belgrade and visiting its monuments, which have had an important role in major historical events, will help you to understand part of the future not only of Serbia, but also of the European continent. Among our essentials are the Fortress, the Roman Fountain, the Military Museum, the famous shopping avenue Knez Mihailova, the beautiful Church of Saint Sava, the largest Orthodox church in the Balkans... The broad Kralja Milana Avenue leads to the always lively Republic Square, where you can see the National Museum, the Opera and the University and enjoy the vibrant atmosphere of the city. Would you like to discover another side of Belgrade? There are several guided tours in different languages (Underground Belgrade, not included), which allow you to visit some of the secret tunnels beneath the city. The trip usually includes a visit to underground facilities, which go back to Roman, Turkish, Austrian and Yugoslav times, such as the bunker built in Kalemegdan on the orders of Tito, from where it was intended to resist a possible attack from the former USSR. And at the end of the day, we shall discover the city's nightlife. Today we will take you to the river port of Sava Mala. Here, this site of huge goods warehouses has become one of the fashionable areas of the city, packed with bars and designer restaurants. Overnight stay in Belgrade.

Day 3: Belgrade - Sremski Karlovci - Novi Sad and Petrovaradin fortress - Subotica - Belgrade

Today we shall explore the north of Serbia, starting from Belgrade and travelling through the beautiful region of Vojvodina, the cultural cradle of the country. More than 4 hours await you at the wheel and fascinating places to discover. Off we go! The first stop is Sremski Karlovci. Sited next to Fruska Gora and located about an hour away, this small historic town is proud to have been the spiritual, cultural and educational centre of Serbia for more than two centuries. Former seat of the Orthodox Serbia Church, Sremski Karlovci was the place where the Serbian community took refuge from the Ottoman invasion when they conquered the country in the Middle Ages. Our next stop will be Novi Sad, the elegant capital of Vojvodina and one of the largest cities in the country. This melting pot of cultures, renowned for its tolerance is the perfect place to enjoy the charms of the city in an unmistakably bohemian atmosphere. This quiet city is also famous for its festivals, among which the "EXIT Music Festival" stands out. Welcoming and easy to get around, Novi Sad is the custodian of treasures of the country's heritage, such as the Petrovaradin fortress, an imposing monument which reminds the traveller of its past as a border fort during the Austro-Turkish War. (Note: Tartars, Turks and Croats all passed through the fortress. In addition to wandering through its labyrinth of alleys, trenches and underground tunnels, a guided tour of the catacombs is available. It offers spectacular views over the Danube and the city. When the good weather arrives, the summer terraces open within the fortress turning the site into one of the focal points of summertime leisure). This town has many more attractions. Walking through its historic centre -replete with charming squares, churches and museums- is always a good idea. Novi Sad was for centuries the border with the East, where the Austro-Hungarian Empire ended and the Ottoman Empire began. Its geographical location encouraged cultural, artistic and religious exchange, which has attracted thinkers and artists for centuries. The city is bursting with culture and refinement; something which is evident in its many art galleries, museums, libraries or theaters. Do not miss the Vojvodina Museum! Novi Sad's multiculturalism and spirit are also reflected in its surprisingly delicious cuisine. The city offers the traveller innumerable restaurants where the typical dishes of Vojvodina can be enjoyed, many of which are influenced by the cuisines of countries like Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. If you have time, we recommend extending the trip to visit Subotica, near the Hungarian border. Here there are many Hungarian modernist buildings to be admired, since at that time Subotica was part of Hungary and was closely linked to Budapest and the latest trends of the time. In this way, Art Nouveau found in Subotica a place to develop. Currently, it is the Serbian city with the largest number of buildings in this architectural style. Return and overnight stay in Belgrade.

Day 4: Belgrade - Mount Avala - Topola - Oplenac Hill - Arandjelovac - Ovcar Gorge and Monasterie - Kablar - Zlatibor

Today's route is also quite demanding in terms of travel, which is why we recommend you leave Belgrade early and head for Zlatibor. You can make a short stop at Mount Avala to admire the views of the city before passing through the town of Topola - located in the heart of Sumadija, in the wine country, known worldwide for the production of wines - and the hill of Oplenac, with the famous church of Saint George. Arrival in Arandjelovac, where you can visit its medicinal springs and the cave of Risovača, which was inhabited by man in the Neolithic period. Travel to Zlatibor, one of the most renowned historical cities in the country, surrounded by bucolic landscapes. Along the way, you will pass through the beautiful Ovcar-Kablar region, with its 14 monasteries built between the 13th and 16th centuries, and the beautiful Morava river gorges. Most of the monasteries were built in isolated regions of the country during the Turkish invasion. Another highly recommended visit to the cave of Potpecka ěcina, which is protected as a natural monument and is very close to the town of Potpece. And finally we come to Zlatibor! The city has become by one of the Serbs' favorite tourist destinations for recreational and outdoor sports activities. Discover its lively atmosphere and its wide variety of things-to-do. We ended the day chatting with the locals in one of the traditional restaurants and toasting with the traditional "rakija" (brandy). "Živelii!". Overnight stay in Zlatibor.

Day 5: Zlatibor - Mokra Gora - Drvengrad - Zlatibor

Travel to the small town of Mokra Gora, to enjoy one of the most famous attractions in Serbia: the historical Sarganska train, built in 1925. It is a section of the railway, which connected the western part of Serbia with the eastern part of Bosnia. Along the 13.5 kilometer journey from the Mokra Gora station, the railway, with a track width of only 0.76 meters, rises to an height of 450 meters. Along the way, the train crosses five bridges and passes through twenty tunnels in a place of extraordinary natural beauty. The train was reopened as a tourist attraction after its restoration in 1999. After the train ride, we return to the car to continue to Drvengrad, in Mokra Gora, located about ten minutes away from the famous train station. Get ready to see a movie location! Located between the Tara and Zlatibor mountains, for many locals it is the closest thing to a "Serbian Hollywood" and is a real tourist attraction, which has revitalized the area. The idea of building the wooden microcity of Drvengrad arose during the filming "Life is a Miracle", by the famous director Emir Kusturica. Currently, Drvengrad is a country-style village with a small church and a secluded square surrounded by traditional wooden houses. The houses are genuine and were brought from various parts of Serbia and Bosnia. There is also an art gallery, a library, a cinema, a bakery that sells homemade cookies, a restaurant specialising in local food and a local craft workshop... If you are lucky, you may see a movie star in the village bar enjoying the local cuisine. Actors as famous as Monica Bellucci or Audrey Tautou have passed through here. If there is time, you can cross the border and visit the city of Visegrad, in Bosnia. There you can see the famous old bridge over the Drina river immortalized by the Nobel laureate Ivo Andric in his novel "The Bridge over the River Drina". Return and overnight stay in Zlatibor.

Day 6: Zlatibor - Folk Museum of Sirogojno - Kraljevo - Monastery of Žica - Maglic Fortress - Studenica Monastery - Niš

A full day awaits, which is why we recommend you hit the road at the beginning of the day. On the way to Niš, located about four and a half hours by car from Zlatibor, there are interesting places including some of the most important monuments and historical places in the country. Keep in mind that these stops will prolong the trip by several hours. We recommend managing time well and choosing the visits, which appeal to you most. Today allows you to get to visit some of the most important monasteries considered as having significant heritage value. En Route to explore the centre of the country! A first visit might be the open-air ethnographic museum in Sirogojno, a unique place, which brings the traveller closer to the rural lifestyle of nineteenth-century Serbia. After this cultural interlude, the road leads to Kraljevo, from where you can visit the great monastery of Žica, the spiritual heart of medieval Serbia. This is a place of beauty and history. It was here that the Serbian Orthodox Church was born and the Serbian kings were crowned. (Note: The monastery includes a fascinating collection of frescoes). After this interesting visit, we recommend following the Route to Maglič, where you can see the impressive Maglič fortress, which guarded the vital road between the north and the south of Serbia. And after just a half an hour drive, there is another gem: the monastery of Studenica, recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. In this great monastery there are two fortified churches in white marble with magnificent frescoes from the 12th and 13th centuries, the peak of Serbian religious art. After the visit to Studenica, we continue to the city of Niš, located about 3 hours and 30 minutes away. The third largest city in the country surprises the traveller with its energetic feel, its mix of cultures, its university atmosphere and surprising contrasts. And at the end of the day, visit the bars and enjoy the local cuisine while listening to live music. Overnight stay in Niš.

Day 7: Niš - Viminacium - Smederevo - Belgrade

We wake up in the bohemian Niš, with its fortress, the mosque of Bali-Begova and the excavations of the Roman villa of Mediana... The gloomy "Tower of the Caravels" (Cele Kula) provides one of the most disturbing sights of the trip. Surrounded by a chapel, near the city of Niš, the tower was built after a bloody battle (180) with the skulls of Serbian rebels who fought against Turkish rule. Today this tower is a symbol of Serbia's struggle to achieve independence from foreign domination. After this thought-provoking visit, we take to the road again to return to Belgrade. You can break the journey at the excavations of Viminacium, an ancient Roman city abandoned in the sixth century, and Smederevo, capital of medieval Serbia. Optionally, from Viminacium we visit the fortress of Golubac, taking a detour of about 2 hours. After arriving in Belgrade, we enjoy its lively atmosphere and its wide range of leisure and restaurant options. If you travel in summer, we encourage you to visit Ada Ciganlija, a small river island located in the centre of Belgrade, which has cafes on the lakeshore, numerous parks and areas for sports. At night, it is also a good place to go, with its night spots where you can enjoy the warm summer night. Overnight stay in Belgrade.

Day 8: Belgrade - City of origin

Arrival at the airport with enough time to drop off your rental car and flight back to the city of origin. Arrival. End of the trip and our services.

Services included in the trip

- Return flight.
- Stay in selected hotel in Belgrade.
- Selected meal plan in Belgrade.
- Stay in selected hotel in Zlatibor.
- Selected meal plan in Zlatibor.
- Stay in selected hotel in Nis.
- Selected meal plan in Nis.
- Rent-a-car.

Services NOT included

- Possible toll charges.

Important remarks

- - Driving through Serbia: 1. Serbia is located on Pan-European corridor X, which is the shortest route between central and south-western Europe and directly links eight countries: Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary, Serbia, Bulgaria, Macedonia and Greece. In Belgrade the European routes E70 and E75 meet; the E75 and E80 in Niš; and the E80 and E65 in Priština. 2. To drive in Serbia, drivers need their driving licence and an insurance policy (Green Card). 3. ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE: YOUR CONTRACT provides YOU with an emergency road service programme when required, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The 987 number is open 365 days a year. 4. In Serbia, traffic regulations are generally equivalent to those of the member states of the European Union. The speed limit in urban areas is 50 km / h. Speed limits on roads outside populated areas, unless otherwise indicated by traffic signs, are as follows: 120 km / h on highways, 100 km / h on main roads and 80 km / h on other roads..
- - - Triple rooms in Europe are generally rooms with twin beds or a double, in which a folding bed is installed to accommodate the third person. Due to the inconvenience this causes, we advise against using this option as far as possible..
- - - The proposed excursions and tours for each day are purely suggestions, as you can tailor the trip to suit your times, tastes and needs..
- - - A credit card is considered a guarantee, so sometimes you will need one for check-in at hotels..
- - - Hotels usually have cots available. Otherwise, babies will have to share a bed with an adult..
- - - To pick up your rental car, you'll need a credit (not debit) card in the name of the person who made the booking, who must also be the named driver of the vehicle..