BALKANS MOSAIC: BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA, MONTENEGRO AND CROATIA

OCTOBER 2–15, 2021

Explore these three distinctive countries and, through conversations and discussions with insightful leaders, learn more about the area’s turbulent history and explore their path to a more hopeful future.

OCTOBER 2

Depart the U.S. for Sarajevo.

OCTOBER 3: SARAJEVO

- Arrive in Sarajevo and transfer to the Hotel President, located in the center of the old town. Enjoy grand views of the Miljacka River or the 15th-century silk bazaar, Baščaršija, now a museum located in the old town.

- This evening meet fellow travelers for an evening reception followed by dinner.

OCTOBER 4: SARAJEVO

- Start the day with an overview lecture of the history of Bosnia Herzegovina with a concentration on the last few centuries. On April 5th, 1992 the 1,425-day siege of the city of Sarajevo started – the longest blockade of a capital in modern history. Hundreds of mortars and countless bullets rained down on the city from Trebević, killing a large proportion of the 11,541 people killed during the period. Gunfire was a fixture of daily life for more than three years. In August 1995, following mortar attacks that killed dozens of civilians and provoked widespread international condemnation, NATO finally intervened and began strategic bombing of the artillery encampments on Trebević. The Bosnian Serbs were forced into retreat and the Dayton Peace Agreement soon followed. The agreement achieved its immediate purpose of putting an end to the bloodshed, but also bequeathed an extremely complex system of government, splitting the nation into two largely autonomous entities – the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska – along ethnic lines.
Afterward head to town for a walking tour of this beautiful city, with its mosques, synagogues, Orthodox and Catholic churches. We begin at the point that Archduke Franz Ferdinand, was assassinated by Gavrilo Princip. The political objective of the assassination was to break off Austria-Hungary’s South Slav provinces so they could be combined into a Yugoslavia. The assassins’ motives were consistent with the movement that later became known as Young Bosnia. The assassination led directly to the First World War.

• Continue on to the Emperor’s Mosque, the first mosque in the city, built in 1457 by the Ottomans. Stop outside what is called Sarajevo’s City Hall, now a library, where Archduke Franz Ferdinand had been attending a reception shortly before he was killed. It was destroyed in 1992 by Serb shelling, along with almost two million books, including many rare volumes reflecting the multicultural life under the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian It re-opened in 2015 has been rebuilt exactly to the original plan.

• A few blocks away you can see the White Fortress and Yellow Fortress, built in 1739 and 1739 as military barracks for the Austro-Hungarian Army. Walk down Coppersmith Street, where copper crafts are handmade using the same techniques passed down through the generations, into the heart of old Sarajevo. Stop at Morica Han, an old caravanserai in the center of the Ottoman section of the Old City, a rare place where mosque, cathedral, orthodox church and synagogue coexist in a small geographic space.

• The Gazi Husrev-beg Mosque is Sarajevo’s main mosque that was built in 1531 when the Ottoman Empire was at its peak. Walk through the city’s bazaar, the longest bazaar west of Istanbul, built in the 1540s. The Ottoman Empire was the only empire that opened up to Sephardic Jews after their expulsion from Spain and prior to World War II, Sarajevo had a big population of Jews but today only 700 of the original 400,000 remain.

Enjoy lunch at Zara iz Duvara, The Stinging Nettle.

Meet with poet and short story author Faruk Sehic. Mr. Sehic studied veterinary medicine in Zagreb until the outbreak of the Bosnian war in which he became an active combatant, where he led a unit of 130 men. After the war, he turned to literature and literary critics have hailed Šehić as the leader of the “mangled generation” of writers born in 1970s Yugoslavia. His books have achieved cult status with readers across the whole region. His short story collection Pod pritiskom (Under Pressure) published in 2004, won him the Zoro Verlag Prize, as a collection of short stories inspired by his time as a combatant in the Bosnian war of the 1990s.

Later visit the city’s only escape route used during the 1992-1995 siege - a three foot wide about five feet high, hand-dug tunnel which was constructed under the airport runway. This tunnel acted as the city’s lifeline to the outside world and was eventually equipped with rails to transport food and arms.

Before dinner enjoy a drink at the Hotel Holiday. The hotel was the former Holiday Inn where the world’s press was based during the siege. The hotel was bombed several times as shown on worldwide news. Walk across the street for dinner at Bon Appetit.

OCTOBER 5: SARAJEVO

This morning head to the Bosnia and Herzegovina headquarters of Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) where we will meet with editor, Denis Dzidic. BIRN is a network of non-governmental organizations promoting freedom of speech, human rights and democratic values in Southern and Eastern Europe.
• Continue on to meet with Seneka Ibrizimbegovic (schedule permitting), the director of Ars Aevi Art Depot, south-east Europe’s greatest collection of international contemporary art. Conceived during the war as an example of international cultural cooperation, the depot became a reality thanks to a grant from the Italian government. Admire works by artists such as Michelangelo Pistoletto, Marina Abramovic, Joseph Beuys and Janis Kounelis.

• After lunch at a local restaurant, head to Gallery 11/07/95, the first memorial gallery in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The gallery aims to preserve the memory of the events that took place during the month of July 1995 in Srebrenica, a small town in Eastern Bosnia.

• Take the Trebević Cable Car which reopened in April of 2018, 26 years after the siege began and 73 years since the city’s Second World War liberation. It follows the same route as the previous cable car, travelling from the old town to the lungs of Sarajevo, Mount Trebević which rises majestically above the city.

• At the top visit remains of the 1984 Winter Olympics including the former bobsled and luge run now covered in colorful graffiti created by local street artists of Sarajevo.

• Head back into town and visit the Jewish Cemetery, the second oldest and largest Jewish cemetery in Europe, after Prague. End the day at the Jewish Museum, housed in the oldest synagogue in Bosnia and Herzegovina, built in 1581.

• Dinner at leisure.

OCTOBER 6: MOSTAR B, L, D

• Depart Sarajevo and head south to Mostar, the capital of Herzegovina.

• Upon arrival meet with NDC Mostar, an NGO that works to promote a society that offers equal opportunities for all citizens, regardless of national, religious, political, gender, social background or affiliation, to a quality and non-discriminating educational system based on respect for human rights.
After lunch at a wonderful local restaurant explore the historic town of Mostar. Spanning a deep valley of the Neretva River, the town developed in the 15th and 16th centuries as an Ottoman frontier town and later, during the Austro-Hungarian period in the 19th and 20th centuries. Today the Old Bridge area, with its pre-Ottoman, eastern Ottoman, Mediterranean and western European architectural features, is an outstanding example of a multicultural urban settlement. The reconstructed Old Bridge and Old City of Mostar are symbols of reconciliation, international co-operation and of the coexistence of diverse cultural, ethnic and religious communities.

Here we will meet with members of the Commission to Preserve National Monuments of Bosnia and Herzegovina to learn more about the preservation of national and historical sites in Mostar. Joining the group to discuss reconstruction and preservation process is Inka Peršić and his architect colleagues.

Check into the Hotel Eden.

Dinner at Kanoba Taurus.

**OCTOBER 7: MONTENEGRO. KOTOR BAY**  
**B, L, D**

This morning set out for Montenegro. Our first stop will be at the medieval town of Blagaj. Home to a 600-year old Dervish monastery, it is situated at the base of a cliff, next to the source of the river Buna.

Continue on to the Kravice waterfalls which plunge from cliffs as high as 83 feet into a natural, watery amphitheater that is almost 500 feet across. The series of waterfalls at Kravice are tufa cascades nestled in a natural reserve southwest of Mostar.

After lunch, continue on to Montenegro which gained independence at a referendum held on May 21, 2006 when 55.5% of citizens voted in favor of independence. Sandwiched between Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Albania, Montenegro is a largely unknown gem with a heritage that incorporates the legacy of the Venetians, Ottomans, the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the former Yugoslavia.

Check into the Iberostar Heritage Grand Perast, located in Pearst on the Kotor Bay. With its mountainous backdrop, beautiful blue waters and medieval and Venetian-era settlements, the butterfly-shaped Kotor bay is the jewel in the Montenegrin crown.

Designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1979 due to its sweeping landscapes and well-preserved architecture—including fortifications built during the Venetian period—the tiny Adriatic coastal town of 13,000 invokes both Norwegian fjords and Lake Como.

Enjoy dinner tonight at a local restaurant.

**OCTOBER 8: MONTENEGRO. KOTOR BAY**  
**B, L**

This morning explore Kotor, a UNESCO World Heritage site and a living breathing museum.

The walled town of Kotor itself is a wonder of cobbled streets and squares, churches and a lovely museum bearing proud testimony to the region’s seafaring prowess. Explore crumbling churches and the Venetian-inspired architecture where the palazzos of wealthy residents dot the shores.

Enjoy lunch at Pescaria Dekaderon.
• After lunch return to Perast, which is located at the site of a famous victory against the Ottomans. Throughout history, many have struggled to conquer this place - the Byzantine Empire, the Venetian and Hungarian, the French and the Austrian. Each has left a significant mark on this beautiful site. Walking through the tiny town one can feel the strong memories of the days when it was rich and powerful.

• From here board a boat to make a very special pilgrimage by boat to the island known as Our Lady of the Rocks which sits on a man-made island. Two sailors in 1452, returning to Perast from a difficult voyage, discovered an icon of the Madonna and Child resting on a rock in a shallow part of the Bay. The sailors dropped stones around the spot where the icon was found, slowly creating an islet and building a small chapel. It soon became a tradition for sailors to drop stones in the water around the chapel before a voyage, to contribute to the strength of its foundations and to ask the Virgin Mother to bring them safely home.

• Dinner at leisure.

OCTOBER 9: DUBROVNIK

• This morning head to Dubrovnik. This UNESCO World Heritage city 'made of stone and light' is without doubt one of the most spectacular in Europe. Surviving Napoleonic conquest, Italian occupation in World War II and the Serbian siege in 1991-92, today’s Dubrovnik is remarkably whole and flawless. The ‘Pearl of the Adriatic’ is still as lustrous and grand as it was in the 17th century.

• Upon arrival enjoy a walking tour of Dubrovnik, made famous here in the U.S. as a result of the Game of Thrones, much of which was filmed in Dubrovnik. The town began as a refugee settlement for Roman and Slavic peoples against barbarian invasions. From its founding, it was a prize sought by Venice, Hungary, Turkey, and others who recognized the city’s logistical value as a maritime port.

• Begin at the Dominican Monastery and church (the biggest of its kind in the Southern Mediterranean), built in the 14th century. The monastery’s rooms circle the cloister, whose graceful triple arches frame a small garden with Mediterranean plantings.

• Continue to the Church of St. Blasius, the patron saint of Dubrovnik. Its rich ornamental interior is a perfect setting for Dubrovnik’s most treasured artwork: the 15th century statue of St. Blasius in gilt silver, holding a scale model of the city.

• After lunch, explore the city’s walls which are as much a part of Dubrovnik’s spirit as they are its armor. There is no other structure like it still standing in its entirety anywhere else in the world. The wall and its fortresses and towers are works of art as they undulate around the Old Town in a protective embrace, creating a magnificent architectural frame for this historic city. Construction began in the 9th century, but the wall has been continually improved over the centuries by the locals and with foreign help.

• Drive north of Dubrovnik and check-in to the Hotel Palace, located away from the crowds of tourists with beautiful views. Enjoy dinner at a local restaurant.

OCTOBER 10: SPLIT

• This morning head towards Split stopping en route at Mali Ston, a delightful fishing village with a rich history. Nearby are the salt pans that for centuries were a major source of income for the Republic. Due to exceptionally high salinity of the Adriatic Sea, the composition of minerals obtained through the natural evaporation of the water makes its salt a highly prized ingredient.

• After a delightful lunch accompanied by local wines, take a leisurely drive north to Split. The road follows the most beautiful part of the Croatian coast, weaving through small towns and fishing villages, passing fortifications against the Ottomans, Napoleon’s roads and obelisks, limestone quarries, stone churches and monasteries, old terraced vineyards, olive groves defying gravity, and even a few oyster farms.
• Arrive in Split which was built inside a well-preserved Roman palace. Over the centuries, the palace grew into a city and the history of its development is clearly visible in the Romanesque chapels, Gothic palaces, Renaissance loggias and Baroque church interiors. It is one of the finest preserved examples of imperial palaces anywhere in Europe and in 1979 became a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

• Transfer to the Cornaro Hotel, located in Old Town, just steps from the Diocletian’s Palace.

• Before dinner this evening meet Nikola Bajto, the Editor-in-Chief of Novosti, a weekly left-leaning magazine published by the Serb National Council.

• Dinner at a local restaurant this evening.

**OCTOBER 11: SPLIT**  
*B, L*

• Begin exploring Split this morning with an extensive walk through Diocletian’s Palace whose remnants can be seen throughout much of the old city. The Palace is one big, continuous restoration project – our walk will focus on all the highlights open to public at the time of our visit.

• Continue to the Cathedral of Sveti Duje (Saint Dominic) with its medieval and renaissance art treasures. The building was erected by Diocletian as his mausoleum but was consecrated as the cathedral in the 7th century.

• Close by is an excellent farmers market where we will have the chance to buy food which will be prepared by a local chef for our lunch. After lunch, the balance of day is at leisure to further explore the palace’s numerous churches, bell towers and small squares.

• After lunch, meet with a local non-profit organization working on environmental issues facing the region.

• Enjoy the afternoon at leisure with dinner on your own.

**OCTOBER 12: ZAGREB**  
*B, L, D*

• Depart Split this morning to drive to one of Europe’s great natural wonders – Plitvice National Park which was among the first natural sites to make it on to the UNESCO world heritage register.
Walk along wooden walkways to enjoy the blue-green beauty of a scenic wonderland of 16 interconnected lakes, flanked by waterfalls and primeval forest. Visit Korana Canyon to see the 70-metre-high falls and enjoy panoramic vistas of the park.

Continue on to Zagreb stopping at Karlovac which was established by the Austro-Hungarians in 579 as a military installation to defend against the encroaching Turks. Many of Karlovac’s stately baroque buildings still bear significant scars from Serbian artillery, but work is being done to repair the damage.

Arrive in Zagreb and transfer to Hotel Dubrovnik. After nearly a millennium of foreign domination, Zagreb has come into its own and its historic core and public squares have been carefully brought back to their former glory.

After dinner at a local restaurant, take an optional short walk to the Zagreb Observatory which is more than 100 years old and located in an old medieval tower. It recently acquired a brand new telescope and staff working at the observatory each evening are eager to share the best evening star-spotting.

Visit is the Museum of Broken Relationships. When Croatian artists Olinka Vistina and Drazen Grubisic separated, their reluctance to part with the sentimental reminders of their fizzled love inspired them to open the Museum of Broken Relationships, so that the items could remain together. The museum contains a fascinating collection of former tokens of affection!
• After lunch learn about an interesting project called Zagreb before the Year 1094. Project authors took exhibits from a number of museums back to the streets and created replicas of interesting exhibits on the spots where they had actually been discovered in the first place. It will suddenly strike the traveler that the history of this city is so much older than you saw this morning. The Romans were here, the Celts were here, woolly mammoths walked the streets of Zagreb and remains of a prehistoric whale were even found. This fascinating project and the exhibits it has sponsored provide a journey taking you back thousands of years and making Zagreb’s history come to life!

• Enjoy at farewell dinner at Vinodol.

OCTOBER 15: RETURN TO THE US

PRICING

Per person double occupancy: $6,995
Single supplement: $1,540

INCLUDED

• Accommodations, based on double occupancy, in 4-5 star hotels, or best available, as listed.
• Airport transfers on designated arrival and departure dates only
• Meals as listed in itinerary (B,L,D)
• Water on the bus at all times
• All sightseeing and excursions in a private air-conditioned bus
• All private events and speakers as listed
• All entrance fees listed
• Services of an English-speaking tour manager who will travel with the group from the beginning to end
• Services of local guides
• Welcome and farewell receptions with wine
• All gratuities

DOES NOT INCLUDE

• International airfare to Sarajevo and return from Zagreb
• Passport fees
• Luggage Charges
• Drinks, excluding wine at welcome and farewell receptions
• Travel insurance
• Items of a purely personal nature
• Any items not specifically listed as included