



MEJDI TOURS

MEJDI Tours Group Departure

- Tour:** Exploring the Balkans: The Land of Blood & Honey
- Dates:** October 7-17, 2021; May 26 - June 5, 2022
- Included:** 10 nights' accommodation at the following hotels or similar (double occupancy): Boutique Hotel Museum (Belgrade), Hotel Europa (Sarajevo), Hotel Mepas (Mostar), Hotel Grand Villa Argentina (Dubrovnik)
1 Bosnian MEJDI-Trained guide for 10 days
1 Serbian MEJDI-Trained guide for 10 day
8 days of private bus transportation
Internal flight (Belgrade-Sarajevo)
Meals listed in the itinerary: 10 breakfasts, 7 lunches, 4 dinners
Entrances, sites, and honorariums for speakers¹
Water on the bus throughout the tour
US-based customer service representatives
- Not included:** International airfare
Travel insurance-**HIGHLY RECOMMENDED**
Single Supplement-\$775
Meals not mentioned in the itinerary
Drinks at included meals
Arrival/departure airport transfers
Gratuities
Anything not explicitly mentioned in the included section

¹ Subject to confirmation based on availability

Overview:

Explore the Land of Blood & Honey in dual perspectives, with both a Serbian and a Bosnian guide throughout. 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. Explore the fortified town of Dubrovnik, on the Adriatic Coast of Croatia, and meet one of the most well known photojournalists in the region.

Itinerary:

Day 1: Arrival - Belgrade, Serbia

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

Hotel: Boutique Hotel Museum, Belgrade (D)

Day 2: Belgrade Old Town (no bus)

This morning, set 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. Upon arrival in Belgrade, 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. 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 (Despot's Gate, Sahat Tower, Woman Well, and the Statue of the Victor), Lower Town (Nebojša Tower, Amam, The Gate of Carl VII), 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**.

Hotel: Boutique Hotel Museum, Belgrade (B, L)

Day 3: The History of Yugoslavia

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: Boutique Hotel Museum, Belgrade (B, L)

Day 4: Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

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, longer even than the siege of Stalingrad. 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 Europe, Sarajevo (B, D)

Day 5: Sarajevo, Then and Now

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.**

Hotel: Hotel Europe, Sarajevo (B, L)

Day 6: Remembering a Troubled Past

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**. Spend the remainder of the evening at leisure.

Hotel: Hotel Europe, Sarajevo (B, L)

Day 7: The City of Mostar

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 (B, L, D)

Day 8: Neretva River Rafting

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. Then, continue to lunch and **wine-tasting at a private winery with the wine-maker**. After lunch, visit the country's famous **Kravica Waterfall**. Enjoy an evening at leisure.

Hotel: Hotel Mepas (B, L)

Day 9: Dubrovnik, Croatia

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 in Dubrovnik, his adopted hometown.

Hotel: Hotel Grand Villa Argentina (B, L)

Day 10: Elaphiti Islands Excursion

After breakfast, **take a boat ride to explore the nearby islands**, soaking in the site of bright blue water surrounded by beautiful beaches, as well as the history that extends beyond the mainland. Swim and snorkel in and around natural sea caves and explore island trails on foot. Return to shore for lunch on your own and enjoy an **afternoon at leisure at the beach, the pool, or further exploring the Old City**. Join the group for a **farewell dinner** this evening.

Hotel: Hotel Grand Villa Argentina (B, D)

Day 11: Departure

Transfer to the airport (on own) for your departing flight home.

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