



Highlights of Bosnia & Herzegovina, Discovery Tour with Green Visions

The Best of Bosnia & Herzegovina – from Middle age Castles to Ancient Bridges and Stunning
Caves and Waterfalls!



Highlights

- Old Franciscan Monastery & Ancient remains of Royal Cities
- Mostar Old town & Bridge, UNESCO World Heritage Site
- Blagaj & Pocitelj towns, Radimlja tombstones & Vjetrenica Cave, UNESCO Tentative list
- Wine Tasting at Orthodox Monastery Tvrdos from 15th century
- Walk in the great limestone Dinaric Alps – undiscovered by tourists
- Stunning glacier lakes of Sutjeska National Parks, known as “mountain eyes”

Overview

This trip takes in fascinating destinations with stunning natural beauty, a rich cultural heritage and warm hospitality. Bosnia & Herzegovina have for centuries been a crossroads of ancient civilizations, with a magical mixture of European and Near Eastern culture. The diversity is very clear, from the middle age city of Jajce, to the Oriental influence of Travnik & Mostar, and the numerous tiny hamlets where the tranquil way of life has remained unchanged for years. Here we find a unique fusion of traditions, religions and architecture. Small wooden mosques, secluded Orthodox monasteries, Catholic chapels and Jewish synagogues can be found within metres of each other. The natural beauty of this region is truly memorable, from the beautiful rivers and waterfalls in Herezgovina to the glacier lakes, ancient forests and rugged peaks of Sutjeska National Park.

We'll also experience all the cultural complexity of this land, where Muslim, Eastern Orthodox, and Roman Catholic communities coexist. Visit natural wonders like the shimmering river Neretva and man-made masterpieces like the Mostar UNESCO Heritage Bridge.

Day 1 Kraljeva Sutjeska, Bobovac & Travnik

If you're fascinated by the relics of days gone by, you'll love this 6 days walk through the History. Just over an hour's ride from Sarajevo, we'll begin our journey with the village of Kraljeva Sutjeska - home of the centuries-old Franciscan Monastery, Sveti Ivo (Saint John). We follow the picturesque valley of Bukovica Stream beneath the soothing shade of the ancient beech forest. Moving deeper into the valley, we gently ascend on a well-maintained trail to reach the ruins of the 14th century citadel that was one of the last residences of the Bosnian kings. Returning the way we came, we'll take a short walk to the Franciscan Monastery that served this area in the Middle Ages, well before the Ottoman conquest. It's a cultural heritage site of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and we've put in a special request to open the doors for you.

From Kraljeva Sutjeska we will continue our journey to north toward Travnik, the old Ottoman capital of Bosnian province. Travnik is situated in the valley of the Lašva River and bordered by Vlašić Mountain to the north and Mount Vilenica to the south. The Romans recognized the valley's strategic importance as the connection between the regions of the river Vrbas in the west and the river Bosna in the east. They conquered the valley and turned it into a regional center that controlled trade and coordinated the region's defense system. It lasted until the Slavs settled in the region in the 7th century. These Slavs left little evidence of their presence and the valley disappeared from history until 500 years later.

The Ottoman era renewed the glory of Travnik. It was the principal city and military center of the Ottoman Empire. It was from here that the Ottomans orchestrated the invasions further towards the south west. They brought mosques, religious schools, roads and water systems. They fortified the medieval fortress and built a mini-city within its high stone walls. For over 150 years, the vizier – the Ottoman Sultan's representative in Bosnia - had his headquarters in this town, attracting both consulates and trade. Unlike the Roman period, in which Travnik was important as part of a trade route but was not itself a significant trading partner (other than of gold), the Travnik craftsman benefited from the Ottoman trade links, and the town thrived. Travelers visiting Travnik in this era were impressed by the town, called it the European Istanbul and the most oriental town in Bosnia. Ivo Andrić's brilliant 'Travnik Chronicle' gives you a feel of this period.

A MEMBER OF THE
ADVENTURE TOURISM
ASSOCIATION IN BOSNIA
AND HERZEGOVINA

**BOSNIA
& HERZEGOVINA**
**BRAVE
ENOUGH?**

We end the day at medieval town of Jajce.

Accommodation: Hotel Stari Grad, Jajce (**Meals:** lunch, dinner)

Day 2 Jajce & Mostar

We start the day with Jajce sightseeing. This impressive place is surrounded with the old fortress and beautiful old Ottoman-style homes with rushing below them two beautiful 27m waterfalls of the Pliva River. No other town in Bosnia and Herzegovina possesses so many cultural layers and architectural styles in a place so small.

The 3rd-century sacred temple dedicated to the god Mitras from Roman times sits side by side with a valued example of medieval architecture - the old steeple of **St Luke's Church**. Beneath the church are the **catacombs** where high priests and the nobility were buried. Middle age crown of Bosnian kings was held here for a certain time, before the kingdom was conquered by Ottomans in 15th century. It seemed fitting after so many civilisations had settled and fought over this place that in 1943 the AVNOJ was signed and sealed here in one of the most historical moments of Bosnia's and Yugoslavia's history. From Jajce we will continue our journey to south to Mostar.

Founded in the 15th century, Mostar is the jewel of the Balkans. The architecture is a brilliant combination of Turkish ingenuity with local traditions of craftsmanship. Undoubtedly, you will have heard much about this city, which was tragically divided during the conflict in the early 1990s. You can still see the scars of war, but these days Mostar is once again a warm and bustling place with a fascinating history to be encountered around every corner. We will spend the late afternoon exploring its unique sights.

Accommodation: Villa Fortuna, Mostar (**Meals:** breakfast, lunch)

Day 3 Herzegovina Tour (Blagaj, Pocitelj, Kravice waterfalls & Medjugorje)

Our first stop today will be Blagaj. Blagaj's highlights are the Buna Spring and the adjacent Ottoman house/monastery. The spring here is amazing. It flows out of a 200m cliff wall and single-handedly creates the Buna River. Unsurprisingly, the Ottoman sultan was impressed, and ordered a Tekija to be built right next to it. This 16th Century house/monastery was built for the Dervish cults and is still one of the most mystical places in all of Bosnia & Herzegovina. Blagaj's Old Town is worth taking a walk through. This lazy Herzegovinan town moves at a slow pace and many of its old structures are reminiscent of Ottoman days. In the vicinity are also old flourmills that the strong Buna River used to power. Buna river is also known as great place for kayaking, so we will have a chance to experience it. This is a great way to cool off in hot summer days.

From here we proceed to Pocitelj, small quaint and unique oriental style town which is listed on the tentative list of UNESCO world heritage sites, and besides its stunning oriental architecture and Ottoman feel, it also hosts the longest operating art colony in southeast Europe. The most striking object in Pocitelj is the Sahat Kula, a silo-shaped fort that towers on the top of the hill above the town. It used to house watchmen and military guarding against possible invasion from the Neretva Valley. Our next stop will be Kravica waterfall, a wonderful, green oasis in the rocky Herzegovinian landscape. After a short walk and perhaps even a cooling swim we head off for lunch to Medjugorje.

Medjugorje is today known as the second biggest Catholic pilgrimage in Europe. Once, this small tiny village was no different than any other in this area. However, since 1981, it has become a popular site of religious pilgrimage due to reports of apparitions of the Virgin Mary to six local Catholics. Today, Medjugorje is most visited site in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with more than one million visitors a year. In the late afternoon we will return to Mostar.

Accommodation: Villa Fortuna, Mostar (**Meals:** breakfast, lunch)



Day 4 Trebinje transfer, Radimlja, Vjetrenica caves, Tvrdos Monastery with wine tasting

Our journey today takes us all the way to border with Montenegro, via Radimlja with its numerous beautiful mediaeval Christian tombstones, and Trebinje - the southernmost city in Bosnia & Herzegovina.

After two hours drive we reach small town of Ravno and the medieval Orthodox monastery of Zavala. The Vjetrenica cave is the largest cave system discovered in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This extensive cave system has in total over six kilometres of passages. Vjetrenica, as it known, is the richest cave in the world in terms of subterranean biodiversity: among more than two hundred different species are registered in it.

From here we will pass on toward Tvrdos Monastery near the town of Trebinje. This monastery is built on foundations of the first Roman church which remainings are still visible today. The Orthodox monastery was established there in the 15th century, with a cathedral constructed about 1508.

This area is also known by many vineyards gracing the Herzegovinan countryside. Herzegovina's wines are amongst the newest in the 'second world' wine category. This tradition, however, has been in existence since Roman times. Herzegovina's sunny Mediterranean climate and rich hinterland soils produce the finest wines in southern Europe. You will have the opportunity to visit the monastery vineyards and venture into the cellars for an intimate taste of the light and fruity white wines and the rich, earthy, bold tastes of the red wines. We end the day with easy walk through Trebinje, the small beautiful town placed at the southernmost corner of Bosnia & Herzegovina.

Accommodation: Hotel Leotar, Trebinje (**Meals:** breakfast, lunch, dinner)

Day 5 Sutjeska National Park with Skakavac Waterfall and Trnovacko lake

This morning we will drive to deep and far Sutjeska National Park. After a 2 hours drive from Trebinje, we arrive in the deep and picturesque canyon of Sutjeska River. After Hotel check in, we veer off to Dragos Saddle...to take a peak at Skakavac waterfall deep in Perucica's valley. We will walk around the forest. Its thick, and teeming with endemic life. From here we'll walk on to Prijedor for more incredible views fit for Kings...and Robin Hoods too!! Maglic, Zelengora and Volujak will tower around us....its really magic here. At the edge of the forest we ascend down towards for the Glacier Lake Trnovacko, after 2 hours walk, which is set in the middle of a huge amphitheater of rocky peaks, at 1,500 meters.

The weather permitting we enjoy a swim and tasty lunch stretching your necks to get a glance at Bosnia's highest peaks all around you. After lunch we head back to civilization enjoying the soft glow of the setting sun above the peaks of Zelengora. We finish the day at Hotel Mladost at Tjentiste valley and have delicious dinner in Tentorium Restaurant.

Accommodation: Hotel Mladost, Tjentiste, Sutjeska National Park (**Meals:** breakfast, lunch)

Day 6 Transfer back to Sarajevo

We end the trip after arrival to Sarajevo (3 hours transfer).

(**Meals:** breakfast)



Departures & Prices

Departures

Per request in 2013

Prices

795 EUR (2-3 guests)

615 EUR (4-8 guests)

75EUR single supplement

Rates quoted are per person, based on sharing double accommodations.

Single Supplement - If you prefer single accommodations, you must pay the Single Supplement Fee of 75EUR.

What's Included

- expert leadership, fully-equipped and experienced English speaking Tour Leader/Guide
- accommodations as noted in itinerary
- meals as noted in the itinerary
- sightseeing as noted in the itinerary
- wine tasting in Mostar & Tvrdos Monastery
- ground transportation
- additional guides where necessary
- entrance fees and permits, unless noted separately in costs

What's Not

Meals not noted on itinerary; international insurance; optional tipping to leader, guides and local staff; souvenirs and items of a personal nature (sodas, alcoholic beverages, laundry, etc.)

General Information

Accommodation

Hotel Stari Grad, Jajce. In Jajce we use the Hotel Stari Grad, a newly built hotel in the old quarter of Jajce.

Villa Fortuna, Mostar. Villa Fortuna is located in the center of Mostar, on the right bank of the Neretva river, in vicinity of Mostar Old bridge. Central location of the hotel provides You a quick access to all city parts, with a 10-15 minute walk from the hotel to all important places in the city.

Hotel Leotar, Trebinje. Our night in Trebinje we spent in Hotel Leotar. The hotel is situated right in the old centre of town and offers good service and nicely furnished rooms with en suite bathrooms.

Hotel Mladost, Tjentiste, Sutjeska National Park. Although parts of the hotel have been recently renovated, it is still relatively simple accommodation. However the spectacular location certainly helps make up for this. Rooms are provided on a twin share basis, with all rooms being en suite.

Transport

All in country transport is included during your trip. We travel by new passenger vehicle space for up to 3



passengers and their luggage (or new mini van with space for up to 8 passengers, depending on a size of the group). The main roads are in principle good, but in places very windy. It is on the various mountain roads that you will at times experience a bumpy and slow ride.

Meals

Meals stated in Trip description are included during your trip. Drinks are not included. Whenever we are in the mountains we provide you with a locally prepared homemade meal or picnic lunch, depending on destination we visit. Vegetarian and special diets can be catered for, but options are limited throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina – please inform the office of any specific requirements upon booking.

Group, Staff and Support

Our team of local English speaking guides are experienced mountaineers and group leaders with first hand knowledge of the land, the people and their traditions. Green Visions, has its own in-house training program in partnership with the mountain rescue services to ensure your safety. We are also actively involved in the re-establishment of a high quality mountain guide training program for the country. One English speaking Trip Leader/Guide will accompany you throughout the trip. Green Visions will also engage other local guides to enhance your experience of the region.

Essential Equipment and Clothing

In addition to your “normal” summer walking clothes, you will need the following: Rucksack of about 20-30 liters; 1 liters of water carrying capacity; warm fleece, hat, sunblock and camera.

Passports and Visas

All nationalities require a full passport that must be valid for 6 months beyond the intended length of stay. It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents and to obtain your own visa, if one is necessary, in accordance with the regulations of the country you are to visit. The information offered below is to help you with that process. We are not responsible for the actions of local immigration and customs officials, whether at points of entry or otherwise, and any subsequent effects.

Vaccinations and Health

There are no compulsory vaccinations required, however we recommend that your hepatitis A, Tetanus and Polio vaccinations are up to date. Please consult your doctor or vaccination center for up to date information.

Weather

Bosnia & Herzegovina, enjoys a similar climate to most of central Europe – hot summers, cool springs and autumns and cold winters with considerable snowfall. During your visit in period between May and September you can encounter both cold and warm temperatures (~15–30°C), however these temperatures will be a little cooler in the mountains. Visiting mountain areas is always unpredictable.

Currency Information

The national currency of Bosnia and Herzegovina is the Bosnian Convertible Mark (BAM), with an exchange rate of 1.95 to the EUR and 1.52 to the US\$. ATM availability/Credit Card Acceptance/Travellers cheques ATM machines can be found in Sarajevo and Mostar, but not in the smaller places we visit. Similarly, major credit cards are widely accepted in these cities. You will find it useful to bring some Euros cash to change where ATM's are not available.

Mine Awareness

As most of us know (and if you don't you should) Bosnia is host to many land mines. They have polluted the countryside and cities all along former lines of confrontation. YES, they are a concern and NO, we take no risks. Green Visions has extensive knowledge of mined areas and continues to liaise with the Mine Action Center (MAC), local military officials, local communities in areas of question, and mountaineering associations throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. Everyone of Green Visions' trails have been trekked and



checked by our guides. Gray areas with inaccurate info are automatically ruled out. One of our co founders is a geographer and urban planner for Bosnia and Herzegovina and has extensive knowledge of mined areas and former lines of confrontation -literally down to the meter. Fortunately for all of us, many gorgeous mountains are safe to visit. Our staff is well-rehearsed in mine awareness but this skill will not be necessary on any of our trips.

Responsible Tourism Policy

Tourism can be a real help to local communities, providing income, positive cultural exchanges and a financial incentive to protect their natural environment. Ours is a 'total approach' to responsible tourism, covering everything from the way we plan and operate our trips to the practices of Green Visions as a company. Green Visions trips are designed to allow a high degree of economic benefit to the local communities; we buy local produce, eat local food and use local services, thus ensuring that as much money as possible is retained within the local economies and the host communities. With our responsible tourism policy we are continually reassessing our holidays, trying at all times to ensure that they are socially, economically and environmentally sound.

Tipping (leader and local staff)

Our staff are paid well and fairly for their work with Green Visions. Tipping is at your discretion but many clients wish to tip their leaders and driver at the end of the trip, we suggest between €20-25 for the guide and €7-10 for the driver (if there is any). Most groups prefer to present the money to the leader at the end of the week with two separate envelopes (one for the leader and one for the driver). This is completely at your own discretion and to be used as a guideline only.

Important Note - Please Read

Occasionally, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned. This may be for a variety of reasons – climatic, political, physical or other. In these circumstances we will make the best alternative arrangements possible that maintains the integrity of the original itinerary.

The information in this program is given in good faith, and covers the average range of conditions likely to be found on this trip.

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Oh, the places you'll go!