

## ADRIATIC BEAUTY, BEACHES AND FAIRYTALE TOWNS

*“At the moment of the creation of our planet, the most beautiful merging of land and sea occurred at the Montenegrin seaside... When the pearls of nature were sworn, an abundance of them were strewn all over this area.” L.B.*

Montenegro, often called the “Pearl of Adriatic”, is a country of unique beauty and dramatic contrast where beautiful mountains surround calm waters. Located in the South-eastern Adriatic, has 295-kilometer coastline. All in all, there are 120 beaches, with plenty of Blue Flags to go around. Montenegro presents a mix of the cultural influences of the Venetian, Ottoman and Hapsburg empires which makes it particularly attractive with great cultural diversity. With a mixture of both bustling cities and sleepy villages, it covers all bases. In Budva, the white-washed houses with sun-baked roofs are a picture-perfect Mediterranean scene, and the Medieval city is steeped in history - aside from Kotor, it's got the only walled Old Town on Montenegro's coast. After dark, the town

comes alive with a vibrant nightlife. Further north is Rose, a peaceful hamlet on the Lustica peninsula. Far away from the tourist traps, Rose is still traditionally Montenegrin, and offers some of the best locally caught seafood in the region. The Bay of Kotor is the jewel in Montenegro's crown. Here, looming mountains meet the Mediterranean, and a 28-kilometer bay extends inwards between the peaks. A World Heritage Site for nearly 40 years, this submerged river valley is home to many towns and villages, including the fortified hillside town of Kotor, the bay's namesake. It was once owned by the Venetians, and the influence is very noticeable, with the architecture and cuisine of the bay's settlements showing off an Italian flavor.



## BOKA KOTORSKA

No matter whether you enter Boka by land or by sea - your experience will be the same - Boka will fascinate you! It looks as if the mountains have cracked and let the sea in. This is the southernmost fjord in Europe. The high mountains bend over the thin coastline thus protecting it from the severe climate from the north. That is why Boka is an oasis of Mediterranean vegetation: agave, palm, mimosa, oleander, kiwi, pomegranate, medicinal herbs. When its peaks are covered with snow, the roses bloom in the foothills.

The bay is naturally divided into four smaller parts - Herceg Novi bay, Risan bay, Kotor bay and Tivat bay. The small towns, as treasuries of history, art and beauty, are strong like pearls on its coastline. Kotor is the old coastal and cultural centre. For centuries, it has been a crossroads of commercial roads under the strong influence of Venice. It is protected by mountains with a strong defense structure built during the time of Byzantine Empire. Dobrota is a small town in which numerous palaces of former sailors and shipowners are still preserved. Perast is the homeland of many world-known sailors and a town whose destiny has always been related to the sea.

By its lifestyle, it resembled Venice with which it had very lively trade and cultural links. There are a lot of remains of the old aristocratic

palaces that now bear witness to its ancient splendor and richness. In one of them, the Bujević's palace, the Town Museum is located. There is a very interesting historical story saying that the Russian soldiers used to come in Perast to learn sailing skills and that it was known as a cradle of the Russian fleet. There are two islets around Perast town - Gospa od Skrpjela (Lady of Skrpjel) and St Gorge, both unique tourist attractions.

Risan is famous for the remnants of the classical culture. The remains of a Roman patrician's villa with mosaic floors as beautiful as those made in Roman period can be found here. Herceg Novi is a town situated at the end of the bay. Its appearance is an illustration of its turbulent history. The town is a fine combination of romantic, Byzantine and oriental styles interweaved in the Mediterranean appearance of this town.

Today, Herceg Novi is the town of flowers with all its windows faced toward the sun and the sea. It is one of the warmest towns on the Adriatic coast. One should visit the City Museum and the Archives, the Modern Arts Gallery, and the Old town with Tower clock.

## SOUTHERN MONTENEGRO

Aside from enjoyment in exciting night life and beautiful beaches, Budva will take you on an incredible journey throughout history. Budva is one of the oldest settlements on the Adriatic coast, over 2,500 years old. With its perfect location, settled inside a small peninsula, part of the black Montenegrin Mountains have safely guarded one of the most beautiful Christian settlements and definitely the most amazing churches in this part of Europe.

Sveti Stefan, a fortified island village connected to the mainland by a narrow causeway, its photogenic jumble of 15th-century stone villas overlook an impeccable pink-sand beach and tempting turquoise waters. In the past was a favorite hangout of 60's film stars and royalty like Sophia Loren, Doris Day and Princess Margaret. Sveti Stefan has unsurprisingly been named as Montenegro's most photographed site.

Petrovac is a city with a rich and interesting history. The first habitants settled here in the 3d century A.D., that is according to the Roman mosaics, which Petrovac is surely famous for. Later on the settlement got the name of Castel Lastva in the 16-18th centuries and was renamed to Petrovac only in the 20th century. It is now very attractive to tourists from all over the world, for its fresh air from the pine and olive groves, clear blue

water, a variety of pebble beaches that give the opportunity for an unforgettable family holiday.

Stari Bar. In the western part of the town are the remains of St Nicholas' Church (Crkva Sv Nikole) offering glimpses of Serbo-Byzantine frescoes. The northern corner has an 11th-century fortress with much-photographed views showcasing Stari Bar's isolated setting amid mountains and olive groves. Nearby are the foundations of St George's Cathedral (Katedrala Sv Đorđa). Originally a Romanesque church, it was converted into a mosque in the 17th century by the Turks, but the unlucky edifice was yet again in ruins after an accidental explosion of gunpowder. If you're wondering why St John's Church (Crkva Sv Jovana) is in such good nick, it's because it's been completely reconstructed by one of the families associated with the original church. One of the few other buildings to have an intact roof is St Verenada's Church (Crkva Sv Verenade), which contains a display of photography from the greater Bar area. Ottoman constructions include a solid and charming Turkish bathhouse from the 17th or 18th century, the clock tower (1752) and the 17th-century aqueduct that carried water from a spring 3km away; it was reconstructed after the 1979 earthquake.

## NATIONAL PARKS

### Durmitor National Park

This breathtaking national park was formed by glaciers and is traversed by rivers and underground streams. Along the Tara river canyon, which has the deepest gorges in Europe, the dense pine forests are interspersed with clear lakes and harbour a wide range of endemic flora.

### Lovcen National Park

When you mention Lovćen National Park, many people just think of the Njegoš Mausoleum. Foreigners also like to visit the village of Njeguši and to drive the famous panorama road with 25 serpentine down to Kotor. But Lovćen National Park has much more to offer. In spring, when the pastures are covered with colorful flowers; or in summer, when the forests are full of people who want to escape the high temperatures; but also in autumn, when the beautiful yellow and dark-red colors of the beech forests illuminate the narrow road and the bright autumn days enable spectacular views from the old road to the Krstač pass, high above the coast.

### Skadar National Park

Two Thirds of Skadar Lake is in Montenegro and rest one third is in Albania. Skadar Lake is the largest lake at Balkan Peninsula one of the last fresh water spaces and largest national park in Montenegro and the most famous for its diversity of flora and fauna. Lake itself is unusual for mutual vicinity of different living areas and their chain of feeding. In region of Skadar Lake there are 20 monasteries, churches, villages, fortresses and sacred monuments. This lake is witness of Montenegrin history from 11th century up to now. Around Lake itself there are 18 important historic monuments.

### Biogradska Gora

Biogradska Gora has as its heart 1600 hectares of virgin woodland - one of Europe's last three remaining primeval forests. Many of the trees in the forest are over half a millennium old. In addition to the easily accessed, low-lying Lake Biograd, the park is home to five high-altitude (1820m) glacial lakes.

# CUISINE AND CULTURE

## Montenegro Cuisine

In Montenegro, the local cuisine has a lot of national dishes, which are not all entirely of Montenegrin origin. You can come across Italian, Turkish and Greek cuisine, and even familiar items like hamburgers. Regardless of where the influence comes, you can expect fresh, organic, local source foods in so many places across the country. For cooking and baking bread, most Montenegrin restaurants use sac ( the large metal lid in the form of a shallow bell, which is covered with ash and hot coals ) . Being close to the sea, Montenegro has a lot of fish and seafood dishes. Drying fish is a traditional practice for Montenegro. Meat is just as popular as fish in Montenegro and becomes the more common choice when you venture inland. By the way, olive oil is an essential ingredient of the seafood cuisine especially along the coast because of the olive trees found along the coastline. In Montenegro, baklava often has raisins and finely chopped walnuts. The Montenegrin's version of a doughnut is called krofne, served with jam or chocolate in the middle. Another thing worth trying if done right is the krempita. This cream layered cake is popular in regions of the Balkans.

## Culture

On such a small space, in a country full of contrasts, you will be fascinated by a diversity of culture. Rich cultural heritage is made of remains of different cultures, since Montenegro was on a crossroads of two great civilizations - Eastern and Western, on which territory have existed and still exist 3 big religions: Orthodox, Catholic and Muslim. The richness of cultural heritage is seen through cultural and historical monuments, remains of large and important objects, preserved customs and religion.