



BOSNIA & CROATIA

July 4 – July 13, 2019

Deadline to register April 4, 2019

Unlike any other tour to Bosnia & Croatia, our journey to the "Land of Blood and Honey" will introduce you to the unique ecosystem of the Balkan Islands through our extensive network of local experts. Designed by Bosnian photojournalist and TED Fellow, [Ziya Gafic](#), and National Geographic Explorer, [Aziz Abu Sarah](#), this tour is all about meeting the most interesting people leading the most innovative organizations. Gafic and Abu Sarah will lead you through the historical cities of Sarajevo, Mostar, Srebrenica and Dubrovnik while connecting you to religious and cultural activists, storytellers and artists. On this tour, we will:

- Explore the historical cities of Sarajevo, Mostar, Počitelj, Blagaj and Dubrovnik
- Visit UNESCO Heritage sites
- Visit the town of Srebrenica, site of the first act of genocide on European soil since the Holocaust
- Discover in-depth perspectives of the Bosnian war
- Experience the breadth of Croatian cuisine (According to Anthony Bourdain, Croatia hosts the best past dish which takes 12 hours to prepare.)
- Enjoy island exploration with time to relax on the beach

Winston Churchill once said that the Balkans produce more history than the world can digest. Bosnia and Croatia are the heart and soul of the Balkans.

Only \$5,390 per person, \$300 deposit is due April 4, 2019

For more information or to book your tour, visit our website: www.mejditours.com/open-tour/balkan

Questions? E-mail MEJDI at info@mejditours.com or call 703-349-1554

TRIP INCLUDES

- ✓ 9 Nights Lodging (double occupancy)
- ✓ Breakfast every day
- ✓ 12 additional meals throughout program
- ✓ Led by Ziyah Gaffic and Aziz Abu Sarah
- ✓ Private bus and driver
- ✓ Private arrival and departure airport transfers
- ✓ 1 Domestic flight (Dubrovnik – Zagreb)
- ✓ Entrance and speaker fees
- ✓ Customary tips for drivers, guides, and hotel staff
- ✓ Dedicated pre-trip customer service and on-ground support



ITINERARY:

Day 1: Arrival into Sarajevo, Bosnia

- Arrive into Sarajevo International Airport. Transfer from the airport to our hotel located in the heart of Sarajevo
- Meet the rest of our group for a welcome orientation and dinner with your expedition leader, Ziyah Gafić.
- After dinner, meet with local Sufis and get a chance to learn about their community and culture.

Hotel: Europe, Sarajevo (Dinner)

Day 2: Explore Sarajevo's war-torn past

- This morning, enjoy a walking tour through the old city, visiting the Ottoman and Austrian areas that make Sarajevo such a unique 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.
- We will also visit the ancient Jewish Cemetery, which served as the frontline during the war in 1992. We engage in an exclusive meeting with General Jovan Divjak, a Serbian general who fought on the side of the Bosnians in the war. Take some time to learn about his involvement in the war and about his educational work today through Education Builds Bosnia, an organization that supports the educational development of children orphaned by the Bosnia and Herzegovina war.
- After lunch, visit the tunnel dug during the war, used to evacuate the wounded and provide supplies to the city.
- This evening, attend a private presentation by Ziyah Gafić about his 20 years of photojournalism work in Bosnia.
- Special appearance / session with Dragan and Vanja Bursać. Dragan was a member of Serb Army during the war in Bosnia (at the time enemy army), his father was killed in early days of war in an ambush by Bosnian paramilitaries. Vanja (his wife) is coming from a small Muslim dominated town where her father (ethnic Serb) was imprisoned by Bosnian Army and severely tortured for years before being exchanged. They are now the most prominent voice of reason. Dragan is an award winning writer and regular contributor to Al Jazeera. He receives daily threats.

Hotel: Europe, Sarajevo (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)



Day 3: Srebrenica (this is a long day, alternative day plan is possible for those not wanting to drive)

- After a filling breakfast, head for the town of Srebrenica close to the Serbia border. In Roman times, Srebrenica was a mining town (Srebrenica in Latin means Silver city). In medieval times, it was known for its vast mines, mineral rich waters, as well as being the headquarters of the Catholic church. More recently, Srebrenica was largely a Muslim populated town. After the four-year long siege between 1992-1995, the Serb army overran the enclave and killed nearly 8,000 Muslim men and boys in summary executions. The crime was described as the first act of genocide on European soil since World War 2. Today, life is slowly returning to Srebrenica, but it still resembles a ghost town.
- We visit the powerful memorial and meet with one of the curators of the memorial, Hasan Nuhanovic. Hasan lost his family in the genocide, surviving because he was a U.N. translator. He recently successfully sued the Dutch government for their role in the execution of his family.
- After lunch, we return to Sarajevo for the night, where you are free to explore the many great restaurants on offer.

Hotel: Europe, Sarajevo (Breakfast and Lunch)

Day 4: Herzegovina and 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. It was built to be the last line of defense, and to be able to withstand a nuclear attack.
- After lunch, head for Mostar on the banks of the Neretva River, where we tour the historic old city. Mostar is known for its unique single arch bridge, one of the tallest single arch bridges in the world, named a UNESCO Heritage Site. A traditionally mixed city (Christian Orthodox, Catholics and Muslims) faced brutal war between former neighbors, one of the few places where literally everyone was fighting everyone. Visit one of the local mosques and have the unique opportunity to climb up the minaret for a spectacular view of the city.
- Dinner this evening features a local resident impacted by the war, speaking to the way families were divided throughout the war.

Hotel: Marriott Mostar (Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner)

Day 5: River Towns and into Croatia

- This morning we head for Blagaj, an old medieval town on the edge of the Buna River. Here, we visit their picturesque Sufi shrine and enjoy the magnificent setting.
- Returning to Mostar, we take to the water and travel down the Neretva River, making our way to Pocitelj on a boat. See the ruins of the many bridges destroyed during the war, a perspective only possible from the water. Arriving into Pocitelj, one of the best-preserved medieval towns in Bosnia, we stop for a beautiful open-air lunch beside the river.
- This afternoon, make our way west and across the border into Croatia. Reaching Dubrovnik, check into our hotel and enjoy the evening on your own to explore.

Hotel: Excelsior Dubrovnik (Breakfast and Lunch)



Day 6: Exploring Dubrovnik

- Dubrovnik is 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, extensive renovation that has returned Dubrovnik to its former glory. Today, Dubrovnik has captured attention as the filming location for much of the Game of Thrones. We enjoy a walking tour of the old city, taking in both the history and natural beauty that defines Dubrovnik.
- After lunch, we visit the war museum in Dubrovnik and discuss its effect on the city.
- Later in the day, meet with a renowned international photojournalist who owns a gallery (War Photo LTD) and learn about life in Dubrovnik, his adopted hometown.

Hotel: Excelsior Dubrovnik (Breakfast and Dinner)

Day 7: Offshore Exploration and Wine

- After Breakfast, explore the island, enjoy the beautiful nature, lakes, beaches, and history which extends beyond the mainland.
- Croatia has become known for its wineries, so we will take the time to explore the Croatian wine
- Later in the afternoon enjoy a free evening to explore on your own.

Hotel: Excelsior Dubrovnik (Breakfast and Lunch)

Day 8: Zagreb

- After breakfast and an easy morning, take a flight to Zagreb.
- A special tour of Zagreb designed and led by a fellow travel writer/photographer to explore the city's untold stories. And Learn about how Croatia was rebuilt after the war and its current political map
- Enjoy a food and drink tour this evening

Hotel: Esplanade Zagreb (Breakfast, Lunch and tasting tour)

Day 9: Zagreb

- Sniff out Croatia's black truffles on a private truffle hunt in Zagreb; you'll search for buried treasure in the city's forests and green spaces
- Meet with a panel of civil society and government representatives how did Croatia recover from the war
- Farewell Dinner

Hotel: Esplanade Zagreb (Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner)

Day 10: Departures