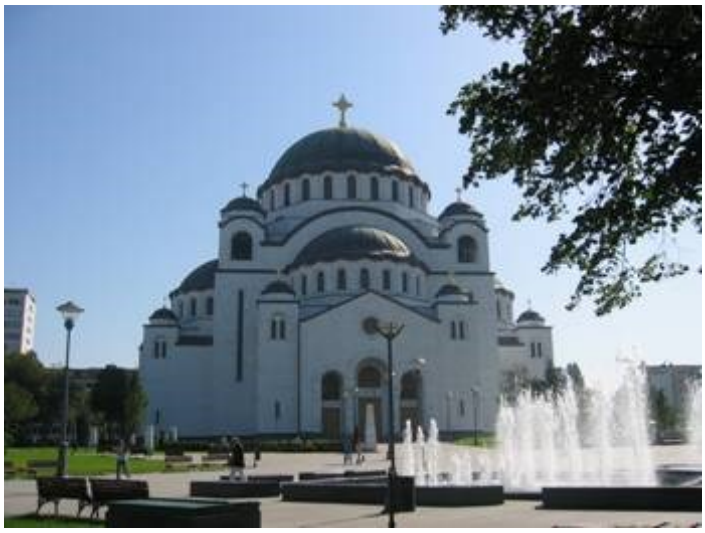
Discover Serbia - 9 days / 8 nights tour

va 1.760 euro pp (in dubbel kamer)

Day 1: Arrival Belgrade, Serbia
Arrive to Nikola Tesla International Airport of Belgrade, and transfer to your hotel. The rest of the day is free.
Overnight in Belgrade – Hotel Moskva 4*

Day 2: Belgrade full day city tour



Enjoy today a city tour of Belgrade, capital of Serbia since 1403, when Despot Stefan Lazarevic, son of Prince Lazar, moved his palace here. We will start our day by driving through the streets of Belgrade.
First we will see New Belgrade on the left bank of the River Sava, with both its' Communist-style as well as very modern apartment blocks. From here we continue to Zemun, which was once a separate town but now is a part of greater Belgrade. Here we will enjoy the old Gardoš Tower and then we will return to the old part of the town by passing through the luxurious residential area of Dedinje. We will stop to pay a visit to the Memorial Complex of Josip Broz Tito, the legendary president of Former Yugoslavia. On our way to the center of the city we will see the new St. Sava Church. This is the third largest Orthodox Church in Europe, built at the place where in 1594 Sinnan Pasha had the holy relics of St. Sava burned at the stake. We will see the Federal Assembly building of Former Yugoslavia, the Church of St. Marko, Royal Palaces of the Serbian dynasties until WWII, and the main square named Terazije.
In the afternoon we will continue our tour by walking from the elegant Republic Square, where we will make a close inspection of its architectonic monuments such as the National Theatre and the National Museum. We will stroll along unavoidable Knez Mihajlova Street – the main shopping and meeting place, in order to see a few other masterpieces of Belgrade's architecture, such as the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. We will then visit the oldest quarters of the 19th century, including the 'Question mark sign' Inn, Princess Ljubica's Residence (now housing a permanent exhibition of original furniture), as well as the Patriarchy and the Orthodox Cathedral.
Walking through the streets of the old part of town we will arrive to the fortress of Kalemegdan, which is the symbol of Belgrade, situated where the River Sava flows into the Danube. Our visit to the fort will start with the Upper fortress area. It includes well-preserved artillery structures dating from the mid-18th century, as well as a medieval fortification - an acropolis with original or partly reconstructed ramparts, gateways, towers and the excavated ruins of a 15th century castle. A few Turkish monuments and some

ancient Roman remains also lie in this area. In this section of the fortification complex we will see the elegant 18th century Baroque Clock Tower and the Roman Well. Our tour of the Eastern Ward includes the Rose Church of Our Lady, along with a panoramic view of the Lower fortress and its monuments - the Nebojsa Tower, the Baroque Gate of Karl VI, and the remains of the medieval metropolitan palace. In the evening we will enjoy dinner in the atmosphere of the local bohemian quarters of Skadarlija, with typical food and music.
Overnight in Belgrade – Hotel Moskva 4*
(B, D)



Day 3: Belgrade - Fruška Gora - Sremski Karlovci – Petrovaradin - Novi Sad – Belgrade

We will take a drive on the old road north, crossing small villages of the province of Vojvodina and the region of Fruška Gora - the only hill in the entire Panonia Valley. Located on the slopes of this hill are 17 medieval monasteries which for several centuries represented the spiritual center of the region and are often labeled as the Serbian Mt. Athos. We will visit Monastery Krušedol, founded in the 16th century and known for its attractive location, historical importance, and a variety of decorative frescos in its church.
Our next stop will be Sremski Karlovci. It is a picturesque baroque town, which was a Serbian religious and educational centre in 18th and 19th century. There, we will enjoy the Baroque-style fountain from 1790 and the Karlovci High School. This site dates from the end of the 19th century and contains decorative elements reminiscent of mediaeval Serbian buildings. We will also visit the Patriarch's Palace, once the most imposing building in the whole region, as well as the Cathedral from the mid-18th century, and many others.
We will treat ourselves today with lunch in typical "charda", a small restaurant usually built to float on the river, which serve great freshwater fish specialties. (optional)
Entering Novi Sad we will first visit its famous fortress of Petrovaradin, built in the 17 and 18th centuries, and once called "Gibraltar on the Danube". This Austrian artillery fortification is situated above the river and represents the second largest structure of its kind preserved in Europe. Built by Austrians at the spot of former Roman, Byzantine and Hungarian settlements, the fortress plays a very important role in life of the town even today, as many cultural events are organized there.
Novi Sad is one of the biggest cities of Serbia and is a capital of the region of Vojvodina.
It is a modern, lively city with lot of growing businesses, but at the same time, with a beautiful taste of the past. We will have a walking tour of the very center of modern Novi Sad to the main Orthodox Cathedral, main Catholic Cathedral, and then continue to have a walk on the famous Dunavska street.
In the evening we will return to Belgrade.
Overnight in Belgrade - Hotel Moskva 4* **(B)**

Day 4: Belgrade – Viminacium - Golubac – Lepenski Vir – Kladovo

We will begin our day today by a voyage to the distant past. We will drive along the banks of the Danube to Viminacium, a capital of Roman Province Moesia Superior. It was a very important military camp in I and II century housing Legio VII Claudia & IV Flavia. It has the status of "Municipium" in II century during the ruling of Imperator Hadrian and status of "Colony" in III century during the ruling of Imperator Septimius Severus.

We will continue to follow the banks of the Danube and we will soon arrive in another fortified town - Golubac, one of the best preserved medieval towns in Serbia. It is located at the entry of Iron Gate Gorge on the Danube (the biggest gorge in Europe) and it is dated to 14th century. A short drive down the Danube will take us to Lepenski Vir. Dated to 6000 years BC, it is the settlement of one of the oldest Neolithic civilization in Europe, and a whole era was named after this site. As the myth says, it was founded by one of Noah's sons after the deluge. We will visit the site where many houses of the village from that era can be seen together with famous and very unique sculptures in the shape of human heads.



Overnight Kladovo – Hotel Aqua Star 4* **(B)**

Day 5: Kladovo - Gamzigrad/Romuliana – Niš

We will continue our journey by leaving the Danube and going south, driving through the far eastern part of Serbia.

Gamzigrad, our first stop today, was built by the Roman emperor Maximilianus Galerius - Diocletian's son in law, who named it after his mother Romula, at the end of III century AD. We will witness the once wealthy palaces and villas, beautiful mosaics, and many churches and squares. There is a theory that this once was a very important town and residence of the emperor. Since 2007 this palace is listed as an UNESCO Word Heritage site.

Time permitted, very close by, we will discover an underworld of coral-like stones, jewels, and snow white crystals in the biggest and most attractive cave in Serbia - Resava Cave.

In the evening we will arrive to Niš.

Overnight Niš – Hotel New City 4*

(B)

Day 6: Niš - Naissus/Mediana – Novi Pazar

Today we will get to know Niš, the second largest town in Serbia. This city is most famous as the birthplace of Constantine the Great. It is situated in the Nišava valley, near the spot where it joins the Južna Morava River, one of the most important Balkan and European traffic lines along which peoples, goods and armies moved. Known as the 'Via Militaris' in Roman and Byzantine periods and the 'Constantinople road' in the Middle Ages and the period of Turkish rule, these roads still represent major European traffic arteries.

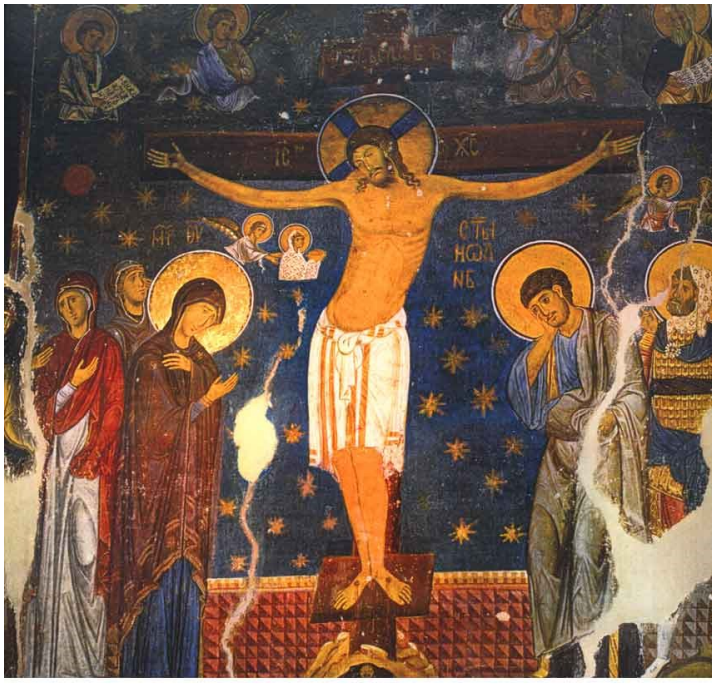
Niš is one of the oldest cities in the Balkans, and has from ancient times been considered a gateway between the East and the West. There is abundant archaeological evidence that Niš was inhabited even in prehistoric times. The city was named after the Nišava River, which was called Navissos by the Celtic inhabitants of the town. Each new conqueror gave the town a new name: Roman Naissus, Byzantine Nysos, Slovene Niš, or German Nissa.

We will see Niš Fortress, a complex and very important cultural and historical monument that dominates the urban nucleus of the city.

The existing fortification is of Turkish origin, dating from the first decades of the 18th century. It is known as one of the most significant and best preserved monuments of this kind in the Balkans.
Also we will visit Mediana, a royal property with a luxurious residence, placed in the suburb of the antique Niš, known as Naissus. Constantine the Great (280 - 337 AD) was born and raised in Naissus. He ruled the Eastern Roman Empire from 306 to 337 and he consolidated the frontiers of the Empire by imposing a firm organization on the Army and the civil administration. As a powerful emperor, Constantine did not forget his birthplace. He erected a majestic residence in one of the luxurious suburbs of ancient Niš in Mediana, where he often resided and attended to state affairs. Historical records testify it was in Naissus that he passed several laws in the years 315 through 334.



At the beginning of the 19th century it was crucial that the Serbian state liberate Niš from the Turks. In 1809, the strong Serbian insurrection army of 16.000 soldiers, created six trenches for defense near Niš. The Turks attacked the main trench on Čegar Hill. The battle lasted the whole day. As one witness stated, "the Turks attacked five times, and the Serbs managed to repulse them five times. Each time their losses were great. Some of the Turks attacked, and some of them went ahead, and thus when they attacked for the sixth time they filled the trenches with their dead so that the alive went over their dead bodies and they began to fight against the Serbs with their rifles, cutting and sticking in their enemies with their sabers and knives". The Turks eventually overran the main trench on Čegar Hill after this fierce fighting. Casualties were heavy on both sides, with the Serbs losing three thousand soldiers and the Turks nearly twice this number.
After the battle of Čegar Hill, the skulls of the dead Serbian soldiers were built in a tower, called The Skull Tower, on the route to Constantinople. It was done by order of the Turkish pasha Hurshid, the brutal Turkish commander of Niš at that time. Rectangular in its base and three meters high, Skull Tower was built out of 952 skulls of the Serbian heroes as a warning to the Serbian people.
In 1892, a chapel was built over the skulls, which now protects the 58 remaining skulls. Skull Tower is a unique monument in the world, and it faithfully depicts the true nature of the Turkish crimes against the Serbian people.
Overnight Novi Pazar – Hotel Tadz 4*
(B)



Studenica Monastery, Serbia, fresco 1209, The Crucifixion of Christ

Day 7: Novi Pazar – Monastery Sopocani – Monastery Studenica - Sirogojno Ethno Village

First we will visit one of the most treasured sacral buildings of the Nemanjić era, the Monastery Sopoćani. It is an endowment of King Uroš from the 13th century, and its mural painting ranks among the most magnificent and beautiful in European medieval art. The monumentality of Sopoćani frescos, the harmony of colors, and the refinement of expression were all responsible for being granted a place on UNESCO's World Heritage list.

We will visit Monastery Studenica (UNESCO site), founded by Stefan Nemanja. This is considered to be the crowning achievement of medieval culture and art in Serbia. The monastic complex consists of the fascinating Church of the Virgin (1183 - 1196), the Church of SS Joachim and Anne (also known as the King's Church) and the Church of St. Nicholas, a simple single-nave building. The monastery circle contains monuments raised over a period of 130 years, and several Serbian rulers had a hand in their construction. At the start of this period, the young Serbian feudal state under Stefan Nemanja was consolidating its independence, and by King Milutin's reign it had reached the height of its political, cultural and economic power. The strengthening of the medieval state and of its ruler's might is naturally reflected in these monuments.

Continuing our journey we will ascend to Mount Zlatibor, one of the most popular mountain resorts in Serbia, both in summer as well as winter. Zlatibor is a National Park famous for its beauty and intact nature. It is a mountain of golden pines, after which it got its name (Zlatan - golden, Bor – pine tree). A short drive through the beautiful countryside will take us into an area where the vegetation will change its look, giving you the impression that you are in a jungle. Here you can find unique flora and fauna, such as the Omorica, the rarest of the pine trees endemic to this area. First we will pay a visit to the unique and very charming ethno village of Sirogojno. It is an open-air museum of traditional architecture, as well as an exhibition of handicrafts and world famous hand-knitted clothes.

Overnight at Sirogojno - Hotel Ethno village Staro Selo "Special"

(B, D)

Day 8: Sirogojno - Mokra Gora – Šargan Eight Train – Mećavnik – Belgrade

This morning we will take a nostalgic journey by the old steam engine "Šarganska Osmica" for 15km, crossing breathtaking scenery through 20 tunnels, 10 bridges and across many viaducts. Once, this narrow gauge train, affectionately known as the Ćira (Chira), used to be the only traveling solution for the people of the area. The train cut its path through the astonishing landscapes of Serbia and Bosnia, on its way from Belgrade to Sarajevo, and further on to Dubrovnik. Now it is possible to ride a 15km part of it, famous for its curves in the shape of the number 8 that made it possible to climb the steep slopes of the mountains Šargan and Mokra Gora. The track was reconstructed in 1999.



During the ride, the train makes a few stops, one of which lasts 20 minutes to let you take some fabulous photographs, enjoy the views, or have a refreshment in the cafe of a tiny and charming 'railway station'.
After the train ride we will pay a visit to the ethno village of Mecavnik, the 'Wooden City', built as a setting for the latest film of the very famous movie director Emir Kusturica. The amazing village was, until recently, merely a couple of salvaged traditional wooden houses on a bluff above a beautiful valley.
Departing back to Belgrade we will pass through the region of the Ovcar and Kablar Gorge, where a number of old monasteries were built in Turkish times. Here fervent adherents of the Orthodox Church withdrew to the mountainous, inaccessible, and isolated parts of the country. In the evening we will return to Belgrade
Overnight Belgrade – Hotel Moskva 4* **(B)**

Day 9: Beograd departure
Transfer to the airport for your flight home.
(B)

B - Breakfast L – Lunch D – Dinner

Including private transportation by car, 08 nights accommodation, 08 breakfasts, 02 dinners, English speaking guide, all entrances, all tours as per itinerary, train ticket for "Šargan Eight"

All hotels are carefully chosen for their character or best central location or they are simply the only option at certain destinations. All of them can be changed on a request. The categories mentioned by the hotel names are according to the local standards and sometimes do not reflect to Western standards

(balkan expert + 12pct)