

Balkans Explorer Guided Walking Holiday

Tour Style: European Multi-Centre

Destinations: Montenegro, Balkans, Serbia & Bosnia & Herzegovina

Trip code: EBLCL

Trip Walking Grade: 2



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

The Balkans Peninsula is home to 11 Balkan States, each with their own natural and cultural highlights. This guided walking holiday visits three of them: Montenegro, Serbia and Bosnia & Herzegovina. The holiday includes an exhilarating journey into the wilderness by 4x4 jeep to walk around Montenegro's tranquil Biograd Lake and a walk following the River Uvac to admire the Uvac Canyon and spot soaring Griffon Vultures. In Serbia there's a walk to the summit of Mount Cuker and a scenic ride on a heritage railway. Passing back through Montenegro there's a visit to a beautiful mosque, walks along the Tara River and around the forest-lined Black Lake. There's also a day exploring the Durmitor Ring by vehicle and on foot to enjoy the mountain scenery and traditional villages before moving on to Bosnia & Herzegovina. Here, the star attraction is the city of Mostar with its famous re-built Ottoman stone bridge.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- A multi-centre tour with a walk every day
- All transport

- The services of an experienced tour guide plus local walking guides
- 'With flight' holidays include return flights from the UK and hotel transfers
- 7 nights' accommodation in en-suite rooms
- Half board – breakfast and evening meal
- Some entrance fees
- Jeep safari

HOLIDAYS HIGHLIGHTS

- Visit **Uvac river canyon** with its meanders and circling Griffon vultures
- Ride the **Šargan Eight** historic railway through pretty Serbian landscapes
- Walk in the **Biogradska Gora Lake National Park** and return by jeep safari
- Explore **Mostar's** sights including the famous bridge and Turkish houses



ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival Day – Kolasin, Montenegro

You will be met at Dubrovnik airport for the transfer to Kolasin resort, driving through the beautiful canyon of Moraca River to enjoy the contrast between the steep, dark cliffs and the light-green river. We'll stop at the Moraca Monastery, one of the oldest orthodox monasteries in Montenegro.

Day 2: Kolasin, Montenegro

After breakfast, we take a jeep safari to Bjelasica Mountain, reaching a height of 1,750m where small wooden cabins serve national cuisine. After lunch we take a walking tour of Lake Biograd, located in the heart of Biogradska Gora National Park. Lake Biograd is the biggest and most attractive of seven glacial lakes scattered across the national park. We'll return to the hotel by jeep.

Day 3: Kolasin – Zlatibor, Serbia

This morning we proceed to Serbia with a stop at Uvac Special Nature Reserve where we walk to a viewpoint

overlooking the Uvac Canyon. We continue walking along the bank of the River Uvac, an area famous for its Griffon vultures, which we'll undoubtedly spot during this walk. There is also a huge variety of local birdlife along the way. Later, we transfer to Zlatibor.

Day 4: Zlatibor, Serbia

Today we enjoy a walking tour to the summit of Mount Cuker (altitude of 1,359m). From the top, we'll have spectacular views of Zlatibor and Ribnicka Lake. After lunch, we enjoy a train ride on the Šargan Eight, a narrow-gauge heritage railway in Serbia before returning to our hotel.

Day 5: Zlatibor – Zabljak, Montenegro

Breakfast is followed by a transfer to Zabljak, stopping along the way to visit Husein-paša's Mosque in Pljevlja, regarded as one of the most beautiful sacral monuments of Islamic architecture in Montenegro. We take time for a walking tour on the Tara Djurdjevica Bridge, a concrete arch bridge spanning the Tara River (2km). After settling into our hotel in Zabljak, our group will take a walk around the Black Lake.

Day 6: Durmitor Ring

After breakfast we are transported around Durmitor, stopping at Curevac where we can view the Tara River and the deepest canyon in Europe. We then continue via Mala Crna Gora, Susica Lake, Nedajno, Trsa and Sedlo Pass stopping for walking tours along the way back to our hotel.

Day 7: Zabljak – Mostar, Bosnia & Herzegovina

Today takes us to Mostar for a city tour, including a visit to the well known old bridge spanning the River Neretva. The original Ottoman bridge was built in the 16th century, and has since been re-built, becoming a symbol of freedom. It's considered one of the most exemplary pieces of Islamic architecture in the Balkans. We also visit the Turkish house Biscelica. There's also free time for you to explore Mostar independently. Whatever you choose, a visit to the Karadžoz-Begova mosque is highly recommended. The mosque's large dome and high minaret make it the largest in the region.

Day 8: Departure Day

Breakfast and transfer to Dubrovnik airport.

ACCOMMODATION

Hotel Bianca Resort & Spa, Kolasin - Balkans Explorer

Our holiday starts in Kolasin in the Hotel Bianca. This exclusive resort provides all the sophistication and comforts of a world-class hotel combined with a chalet ambience and the elegance of a private residence. All rooms are en-suite and have Wi-Fi, a telephone, radio, TV, safe, hairdryer, minibar and complimentary toiletries.

Hotel Mona, Zlatibor - Balkans Explorer

Hotel Zlatibor Mona is surrounded by beautiful pine trees, located in the very centre of Zlatibor. All rooms are ensuite with a TV, safe, minibar, hairdryer, telephone and WiFi. Zlatibor is a mountain region situated in the western part of Serbia. The name means 'Golden Pine' ('zlati' - golden, 'bor' - pine) and you'll see why, from the many pine trees in the local area.

Hotel Polar Star, Zabljak - Balkans Explorer

The hotel Polar Star has been designed in a traditional mountain style, surrounded by unspoilt wildlife,

meadows and mountain ranges. Renovated in 2015, the hotel features a wellness and spa centre and all rooms feature a TV, ensuite, hairdryer and minibar. The hotel is located in Borje, 4 km from the centre of Zabljak, on the road to the famous bridge on Tara.

Hotel Mostar, Mostar - Balkans Explorer

This newly built 4 hotel is the perfect finish to your holidays. Located a 15 minute walk to the Old Town, the hotel features a fitness centre with jacuzzi and spa, and a Turkish hammam. Rooms are ensuite with WiFi, TV, telephone, minibar, hairdryer and safe. Mostar is the cultural capital of the Herzegovina region, located in southern Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is also known as the city of flowers, so there is plenty of colour to enjoy when out exploring.

USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

Joining Instructions (With Flights)

If you have booked your holiday 'with flight' you will arrive at Dubrovnik Airport. From the UK we offer flights from several airports which may arrive at different times. Please note that meals are not provided on most European flights, although some airlines may offer a small snack.

If you choose this option we automatically include return transfers between the airport and the hotel. The coach transfer takes approx 6 hours to Hotel Bianca Resort & Spa, with comfort stops.

Joining Instructions (Without Flights)

All our overseas holidays can also be booked without a flight. This is ideal if you are traveling from overseas, or prefer to make your own arrangements from your local airport.

If you choose this option the transfer to the first hotel of the tour is included. The transfer has been arranged to meet the arrival of the London Gatwick flight (see dates and prices tab for times).

Essential Information

Passport Requirements

You may need to renew your British passport if you're travelling from 1 January 2021.

On the day you travel, you'll need your passport to both:

- have at least 6 months left
- be less than 10 years old (even if it has 6 months or more left)

Use the [government website](#) to see if your passport is valid for this holiday

EHIC Cards

The UK government has officially launched the Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC), which will replace the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). UK residents can now apply for one of the GHIC cards, which will gradually replace the EHIC cards as they reach their expiry dates. Every family member travelling requires a GHIC. You can make an application for yourself and on behalf of your partner and any dependent children under the age of 16. Both cards will offer equivalent protection for emergency and medically necessary healthcare needs when in the EU on a temporary stay, which includes holiday, study and business travel. Necessary healthcare includes things like

- emergency treatment and visits to A&E

- treatment for long-term or pre-existing medical conditions
- routine medical care for pre-existing conditions that need monitoring
- oxygen and kidney dialysis

The public only need to apply for their free GHIC cards when their current EHIC expires. The process is likely to take two weeks. For more information visit <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/apply-for-a-free-uk-global-health-insurance-card-ghic/>.

The GHIC is not an alternative to travel insurance. We advise all holidaymakers to also invest in travel insurance that covers healthcare, so they are covered for other issues that may arise, as well as cancellations and lost luggage.

Essential Equipment

To enjoy walking/hiking comfortably and safely, footwear, clothing and equipment needs to be suitable for the conditions. Safety and comfort are our priorities, so our advice is to come prepared for all eventualities.

- Footwear with a good grip on the sole (e.g. Vibram sole) is the key to avoiding accidents.
- Walking/hiking boots providing ankle support and good grip are recommended (ideally worn in), and specialist walking socks to avoid blisters.
- Several layers of clothing, which can be added or removed, are better than a single layer (include spares).
- Fabrics (lightweight and fast drying) designed for the outdoors are recommended.
- Waterproof jacket and waterproof over trousers.
- Warm hat and gloves.
- Denim jeans and capes are not suitable on any walks.
- Rucksack with a waterproof liner.
- Thermos flask for hot drink.
- Water bottle (at least 2 litre).
- Spare high-energy food such as a chocolate bar.
- Small torch.
- First aid kit – your leader's first aid kit doesn't contain any medication or blister kits (such as Compeed).
- Sun hat and sunglasses
- Sun cream.

Optional Equipment

- Walking poles are useful, particularly for descents.
- Insect repellent.
- Camera.
- Gaiters.

Passports & Visas

Passports

Passports must be valid for the duration of your stay; generally, you are recommended to have at least 6 months validity beyond the end date of your holiday on your passport. Your passport will be collected on the coach as there are border crossings involved.

Visas

Visas are not currently required for UK travellers; however, this may change depending on the outcome of negotiations on the UK's exit from the EU. For current travel advice we recommend checking the relevant country pages on the FCO website.

Local Currency

The local currency in Montenegro is the Euro. In Serbia it is the Serbian Dinar. In Bosnia & Herzegovina it is the Bosnian Convertible Mark. Euros are accepted as payment in some outlets in Bosnia & Herzegovina. Payment by contactless debit card or by credit card is accepted in larger shops but smaller outlets may only take payment in cash.

Electricity

220 - 230 Volt AC with round two round pin plugs; you will need an adaptor for any appliances brought from the UK.

HOW TO BOOK

When you're ready to book, you can choose to **book online** or book **over the phone**. Our website offers secure online booking for our holidays, is available 24/7, and offers more in-depth information about all our holidays. If you prefer to call us, our experienced and knowledgeable team are available to answer any specific questions you have and can offer guidance as to which holiday is best suited to your needs.

Our office is open: Monday to Friday: 9am – 7pm Saturday: 9am – 1pm Sunday & Bank Holiday Monday: closed

PAYING YOUR DEPOSIT

To secure the holiday of your choice, you will need to pay a deposit: UK & European Holidays: £150 per person and Worldwide Holidays: £250 per person. You can pay your deposit by debit or credit card with no additional card fees charged or make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account, please see details under BACS payments. You can also pay your deposit by cheque within seven days of booking. Cheques should be made payable to 'HF Holidays Ltd' with your booking reference / Order ID on the back.

NON-MEMBER FEE

Non-members can join our holidays by paying a Non-Member's fee of £30 per person per holiday. Alternatively, full membership is available from £100 – visit hfholidays.co.uk/membership for details.

BACS PAYMENTS

Please quote your booking reference / Order ID when you make your payment online: Bank Name: Svenska Handelsbanken AB (publ) Account Name: HF Holidays Ltd Account Number: 35923304 Sort Code: 40-51-62 IBAN: GB92HAND40516235923304 Swift / Bic Code: HANDGB22

Once we have received your booking and deposit, we will send a confirmation invoice to the lead name. Please check this carefully. For bookings 'with flights' it is essential that the names on your booking confirmation invoice match those on your passport for bookings overseas. Please advise us immediately of any errors. Any name changes after the balance of your holiday has been paid will be subject to a fee levied by the airline.

MANAGE MY BOOKINGS

Payments can also be made through the Manage My Booking function on our website. Click on the link at the top of our homepage. This is available to all customers who provide an email address at the time of booking.

YOUR FINAL BALANCE

The balance is due 10 weeks before departure. As with paying your deposit, you can pay your final balance by debit or credit card, make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account or pay by cheque.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel insurance is an important part of any booking and essential for one of our holidays. HF Holidays works with specialist. Insurance Brokers Campbell Irvine Direct. For more information or to obtain a quote call them on 01702 427 236 or visit hfholidays.co.uk/insurance

PEACE OF MIND

ATOL:

The air holidays and flights in this brochure are ATOL-protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 710. In the unlikely event of our insolvency, the CAA will ensure that you are not stranded abroad and will arrange to refund any money you have paid us for advance bookings. For further information visit the ATOL website atol.org.uk

MEMBER OF ABTOT:

HF Holidays is a member of ABTOT (The Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited) which provides financial protection under the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992 for HF Holidays Ltd and in the event of their insolvency, protection is provided for the following: 1. non-flight packages commencing in and returning to the UK; 2. non-flight packages commencing and returning to a country other than the UK; 3. flight inclusive packages that commence outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland, which are sold to customers outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland. 1, 2 and 3 provides for a refund in the event you have not yet travelled. 1 and 3 provides for repatriation. Please note that bookings made outside the UK and Republic of Ireland are only protected by ABTOT when purchased directly with HF Holidays Ltd.

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY

These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred.

In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

PRICE GUARANTEE

We promise that our earliest published prices will always be the best and if we reduce our holiday price after your booking has been confirmed, we will pass this reduction on to you. Our price promise applies if any subsequent offer price is for an identical holiday, duration, location and date and does not cover any optional extras, flights or additional services.

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