



Montenegro Црна Гора

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Why Go?

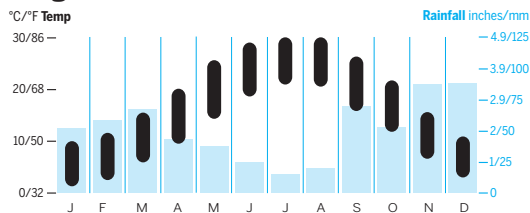
Imagine a place with sapphire beaches as spectacular as Croatia's, rugged peaks as dramatic as Switzerland's, canyons nearly as deep as Colorado's, *palazzi* as elegant as Venice's and towns as old as Greece's. Then wrap it up in a Mediterranean climate and squish it into an area two-thirds the size of Wales, and you start to get a picture of Montenegro.

More adventurous travellers can easily sidestep the peak-season hordes on the coast by heading to the rugged mountains of the north. This is, after all, a country where wolves and bears still lurk in forgotten corners.

Montenegro, Crna Gora, Black Mountain: the name itself conjures up romance and drama. There are plenty of both on offer as you explore this perfumed land, bathed in the scent of wild herbs, conifers and Mediterranean blossoms. Yes, it really is as magical as it sounds.

When to Go

Podgorica



Best Places to Eat

- » Restoran Stari Mlini (p588)
- » Knez Konoba (p590)
- » Konoba Feral (p585)
- » Stari Most (p595)
- » Restoran Kod Marka (p593)

Best Places to Stay

- » Palazzo Radomiri (p588)
- » Vila Drago (p591)
- » Aman Sveti Stefan (p591)
- » Eko-Oaza Suza Evrope (p601)

June Beat the peak-season rush but enjoy the balmy weather; Boka Navy Day in Kotor.

September Warm water, still, but fewer bods to share it with; the Adventure Race takes off.

October The leaves turn golden, making a rich backdrop to walks in the national parks.

AT A GLANCE

- » **Currency** euro (€)
- » **Language** Montenegrin
- » **Money** ATMs in larger towns, banks open Monday to Friday and Saturday morning
- » **Visas** None for citizens of EU (and many other) countries, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, UK and the USA.

Fast Facts

- » **Area** 13,812 sq km
- » **Capital** Podgorica
- » **Telephone area code** 382
- » **Emergency** police 122, fire 123, ambulance 124

Exchange Rates

Australia	A\$1	€0.75
Canada	C\$1	€0.74
Japan	¥100	€0.89
New Zealand	NZ\$1	€0.89
UK	UK£1	€1.18
USA	US\$1	€0.74

Set Your Budget

- » **Budget hotel room** €10 to €15 per person
- » **Two-course meal** €8 to €20
- » **Museum entrance** €1 to €5
- » **Beer** €1.50

Resources

- » **Black Mountain** (www.montenegroholiday.com)
- » **Visit Montenegro** (www.visit-montenegro.com)

Connections

Many travellers make the most of the proximity of Dubrovnik's Čilipi airport to Herceg Novi to tie in a visit to Croatia with a Montenegrin sojourn. At the other end of the coast, Ulcinj is the perfect primer for exploring Albania and is connected by bus to Shkodra. Likewise, Rožaje captures elements of Kosovar culture and is well connected to Peć. A train line and frequent bus connections make a trip to Montenegro's closest cousins in Serbia a breeze. Montenegro shares a longer border with Bosnia and Hercegovina (BiH) than any of its neighbours. There are plenty of crossings for drivers, as well as regular bus services from towns. Towns with onward international transport include Herceg Novi, Kotor, Tivat, Bar, Ulcinj and Podgorica.

ITINERARIES

One week

Base yourself in the Bay of Kotor for two nights. Drive through Lovćen to Cetinje, then the next day continue to Šćepan Polje via Ostrog Monastery. Go rafting the following morning and spend the night in Podgorica. Head to Virpazar for a boat tour of Lake Skadar and then take the scenic lakeside road to Ulcinj. Finish in Sveti Stefan.

Two weeks

Follow the itinerary above, but allow extra time in Kotor, Lake Skadar and Sveti Stefan. From Šćepan Polje head instead to Žabljak and then to Biogradska Gora National Park before continuing to Podgorica.

Essential Food & Drink

- » **Njeguški pršut i sir** Smoke-dried ham and cheese from the heartland village of Njeguši.
- » **Ajvar** Spicy spread of fried red peppers and eggplant, seasoned with garlic, salt, vinegar and oil.
- » **Kajmak** Soft cheese made from the salted cream from boiled milk.
- » **Kaçamak** Porridge-like mix of cream, cheese, potato and buckwheat or cornflour.
- » **Riblja čorba** Fish soup, a staple of the coast.
- » **Crni rižoto** Black risotto, coloured with squid ink.
- » **Ligne na žaru** Grilled squid, sometimes stuffed (*punjene*) with cheese and smoke-dried ham.
- » **Jagnjetina ispod sača** Lamb cooked (often with potatoes) under a metal lid covered with hot coals.
- » **Rakija** Domestic brandy, made from nearly anything. The local favourite is grape-based *loza*.
- » **Vranac** Local red wine varietal.
- » **Krstač** Local white wine varietal.