Why Go?

Warm, welcoming and a hell of a lot of fun – everything you never heard about Serbia is true. Exuding a feisty mix of élan and inat (the Serbian trait of rebellious defiance), this country doesn’t do ‘mild’: its capital Belgrade is one of the world’s wildest party destinations, the northern town of Novi Sad hosts the rocking EXIT festival, and even its hospitality is emphatic – expect to be greeted with rakija and a hearty three-kiss hello.

While political correctness here is about as commonplace as a nontobacco bar, Serbia is nevertheless a cultural crucible: the art nouveau town of Subotica revels in its proximity to Hungary, bohemian Niš echoes to the clip-clop of Roma horse-carts, and minaret-studded Novi Pazar nudges some of the most sacred sites in Serbian Orthodox. And in the mountainous Kopaonik and Zlatibor regions, ancient traditions coexist with après-ski bling. Forget what you think you know: come and say zdravo (hello)...or better yet, živeli (cheers)!

When To Go

**Belgrade**

**April** Watch winter melt away with a scenic ride on the nostalgic Sargan 8 railway.

**July–August** Rock out at Novi Sad’s EXIT, go wild at Guća and get jazzy at Nišville.

**December–March** Head for the hills of Kopaonik and Zlatibor for alpine adventure.

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One Week
Revel in three days of cultural and culinary exploration in Belgrade, allowing for at least one night of (and recovery time from) hitting the capital’s legendary nightspots. Carry on to Novi Sad for day trips to the vineyards and monasteries of Fruška Gora and Sremski Karlovci.

Two Weeks
Follow the above then head north to treat your eyes to the art nouveau architecture of Subotica, before slicing south for Zlatibor’s bracing mountain air en route to Ottoman-influenced Novi Pazar and the lively city of Niš.

Connections
Serbia is landlocked by accessible neighbours. From the northern town of Subotica, you can travel over the Hungarian border and onwards to Budapest. The town of Vršac is only 10km from the Romanian border, and the Bulgarian border is 45 minutes from the small town of Pirot. When things are calm on the Kosovo border, €7 and three hours get you from Novi Pazar to Kosovo’s capital Pristina. The Zlatibor region stretches to Bosnia & Herzegovina, allowing travellers with wheels the opportunity to take a day trip to the bridge on the River Drina. The whole of Eastern Europe feels accessible from Belgrade: Bucharest, Budapest, Ljubljana, Moscow, Sofia and Zagreb are a train ride away, and regular buses serve destinations including Banja Luka, Ljubljana, Sarajevo and Split.

Essential Food & Drink
» Kajmak Along the lines of a salty clotted cream, this dairy delight is lashed on to everything from plain bread to burgers.
» Čevapčići The ubiquitous skinless sausage and pjeskavica (head-sized spicy hamburger) make it very easy to be a carnivore in Serbia.
» Burek This flaky meat, cheese or vegetable pie is eaten with yoghurt as a breakfast belly-filler or an anytime snack.
» Žito This is a dessert of crushed wheat and walnuts, or try palačinke (crepes) loaded with jam or hazelnut spread.
» Rakija Distilled spirit most commonly made from plums. Treat with caution: this ain’t your grandpa’s brandy.

Fast Facts
Area 77,474 sq km
Capital Belgrade
Telephone country code +381
Emergency 92 (police), 93 (fire), 94 (ambulance)

Exchange Rates
Australia A$1 75.00DIN
Canada C$1 74.43DIN
euro €1 102.07DIN
Japan ¥100 85.86DIN
New Zealand NZ$1 56.28DIN

Set Your Budget
» Budget room 2000DIN
» Two-course meal 1000DIN
» Museum entry 100DIN
» Beer 100DIN
» City transport ticket 80DIN

Resources
» National Tourism Organisation of Serbia (www.serbia.travel)
» Serbia Travel Club (www.serbiatravelers.org)