



# Kosovo

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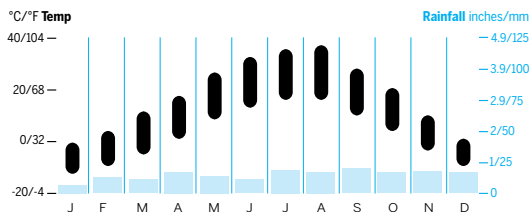
## Why Go?

Europe's newest country, Kosovo is a fascinating land at the heart of the Balkans rewarding visitors with welcoming smiles, charming mountain towns, incredible hiking opportunities and 13th-century domed Serbian monasteries – and that's just for starters. It's perfectly safe to travel here now, but despite this, Kosovo remains one of the last truly off-the-beaten-path destinations in Europe.

Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in 2008, and while it has been diplomatically recognised by 112 countries, there are still many nations that do not accept Kosovan independence, including Serbia. The country has been the recipient of massive aid from the international community, particularly the EU and NATO, which effectively run the entity politically and keep peace between the ethnic Albanian majority and the minority Serbs. Barbs of its past are impossible to miss, however: roads are dotted with memorials to those killed in 1999, while NATO forces still guard Serbian monasteries.

## When to Go

### Pristina



### Dec–Mar

Hit the powder on the still largely virgin ski slopes of Brezovica.

### May–Sep

Pleasant weather for hiking in the Rugova Mountains.

### Aug

The excellent DokuFest in Prizren is Kosovo's best arts event.



## Kosovo Highlights

- 1 Prizren's old town** (p209) Discovering the picturesque, mosque-studded streets of Prizren's charming old quarter and getting a breathtaking view from the fortress.
- 2 Rugova Mountains** (p208) Trekking around the stunning landscapes of Kosovo's most impressive mountains, which rise to the west of Peja.
- 3 Peja's Cheese Market** (p208) Breathing deep at Peja's Saturday Cheese Market inside the town's colourful bazaar.
- 4 Visoki Dečani Monastery** (p732) Taking in gorgeous frescoes and then buying monk-made wine and cheese at this serene 14th-century Serbian monastery.
- 5 Bear Sanctuary Pristina** (p731) Visiting the rescued bears living in excellent conditions at this wonderful lakeside sanctuary that's just a short trip from the capital.
- 6 Pristina** (p203) Exploring Europe's youngest country through its plucky and idiosyncratic capital city, and enjoying its excellent dining and nightlife.

## PRISTINA

☎ 038 / POP 211,000

Pristina (pronounced 'prish-tee-na') is a city changing fast and one that feels full of optimism and potential, even if its traffic-clogged streets and mismatched architectural styles don't make it an obviously attractive place. Far

more a provincial town than great city, Pristina makes for an unlikely national capital, and yet feels more cosmopolitan than the capitals of many larger Balkan nations due to the number of foreigners working here: the UN and EU both have large presences and the city feels rich and more sophisticated as a result.