



Kosovo

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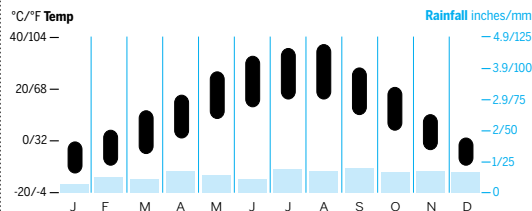
Why Go?

Kosovo may be Europe's newest country, but its long and dramatic history can be witnessed at every turn. Far from being the dangerous or depressing place most people imagine when they hear the name, Kosovo is a fascinating land at the heart of the Balkans and one of the last corners of Eastern Europe where tourism has yet to take off.

Barbs of its past are impossible to miss however: roads are dotted with memorials to those killed in 1999, when Serbia stripped Kosovo of its autonomy and initiated ethnic cleansing, while NATO forces still guard Serbian monasteries. But with independence has come stability, and Kosovo is now the latest word in getting off the beaten track in the Balkans. Visitors who make the journey here will be rewarded with welcoming smiles, charming mountain towns, incredible hiking opportunities and 13th-century domed Serbian monasteries just for starters.

When to Go

Pristina



Dec–Apr The skiing's good in these months.

Jun The Shqip Film Fest brings short films to Peja.

Aug It's a sweat-free summer as temperatures hover around 25°C.

AT A GLANCE

- » **Currency** Euro (€)
- » **Language** Albanian, Serbian
- » **Money** ATMs in larger towns; banks open Monday to Friday
- » **Visas** Kosovo is visa-free for all nationalities. All passports are stamped on arrival for a 90-day stay.

Fast Facts

- » **Area** 10,887 sq km
- » **Capital** Pristina
- » **Country code** ☎381
- » **Emergency** Ambulance ☎94, fire ☎93, police ☎92

Exchange Rates

Australia	A\$1	€0.82
Canada	C\$1	€0.77
Japan	¥100	€0.83
New Zealand	NZ\$1	€0.65
UK	UK£1	€1.18
USA	US\$1	€0.78

Set Your Budget

- » **Budget hotel room** €20 per person
- » **Two-course meal** €12
- » **Museum entrance** €1–3
- » **Peja beer** €2

Resources

- » **UN Mission in Kosovo Online** (www.unmikonline.org)
- » **In Your Pocket** (www.inyourpocket.com/kosovo)
- » **Balkan Insight** (www.balkaninsight.com)
- » **Balkanology** (www.balkanology.com)

Connections

Kosovo has good bus connections between Albania, Montenegro and Macedonia, with regular services from Pristina, Peja and Prizren to Tirana (Albania), Skopje (Macedonia) and Podgorica (Montenegro). There's also a train line from Pristina to Macedonia's capital, Skopje.

Do note that Kosovo's independence is not recognised by Serbia, and so if you plan to continue to Serbia but entered Kosovo via Albania, Macedonia or Montenegro, officials at the Serbian border will deem that you entered Serbia illegally and you will not be let in. You'll need to exit Kosovo to a third country and then enter Serbia from there. If you entered Kosovo from Serbia, then there's no problem returning to Serbia.

ITINERARIES

Two to Three Days

Spend a day in cool little Pristina and get to know this burgeoning nation's charming capital. The next day, visit Gračanica Monastery and then curl through the mountains to Prizren's Ottoman sights, or make a beeline for mountainous Peja.

One Week

After a couple of days in the capital, and a visit to Gračanica Monastery, loop to Prizren for castle views and its Ethnological Museum, then Peja for monasteries and markets before taking a couple of days to hike in the beautiful Rugova Mountains.

Essential Food & Drink

- » **Byrek** Pastry with cheese or meat.
- » **Duvëc** Baked meat and vegetables.
- » **Fli** Flaky pastry pie served with honey.
- » **Kos** Goat's-milk yoghurt.
- » **Pershut** Dried meat.
- » **Qofta** Flat or cylindrical minced-meat rissoles.
- » **Raki** Locally made spirit, usually made from grapes.
- » **Tavë** Meat baked with cheese and egg.
- » **Vranac** Red wine from the Rahovec region of Kosovo.