**Western Balkans: Off the Beaten Track**

- **HRASTOVLJE**
  - Hidden within the Slovenian Karst Region, this picturesque little village is most known for the Dance of Death fresco in its venerable parish church.

- **HUM**
  - Croatia’s Istria region has many gorgeous walled hilltop towns, but what’s particularly charming about Hum is its tiny size (basically one street) and tucked-away location.

- **BLACA HERMITAGE**
  - This fascinating former monastery, hidden in a remote valley on the Croatian island of Brač, can only be approached by a narrow, rocky track.

- **MOKRA GORA & GAZIVODE LAKE**
  - Ongoing ethnic tensions have kept this corner of Kosovo off the tourism radar ever since the war, but with things cooling down, hiking, biking, kayaking and climbing are once again possible.

- **ŽABLJAK CRNOJEVIĆA**
  - It takes a bit of finding, but this atmospheric ruined castle, set on a hilltop in Montenegro’s Lake Skadar National Park, is well worth the effort.

- **KOKINO OBSERVATORY**
  - Dating from the Bronze Age, this prehistoric megalithic observatory sits 1013m up a volcanic hill in North Macedonia, 19km northeast of Kumanovo.

- **VRATNA GATES**
  - Created by erosion in the Vratna River canyon, these three gigantic stone arches in Serbia’s remote Negotin region make for excellent hiking; the least accessible ‘gate’ is also the most impressive.

- **KRUPA WATERFALLS**
  - Bosnia has many wonderful waterfalls, and while these cascades are far from the biggest, they are extremely pretty; they’re tucked away in the Vrbas River valley, between Banja Luka and Jajce.

- **SAZAN ISLAND**
  - Once a top-secret Soviet submarine base, this island off Albania’s remote Karaburun Peninsula was only opened to visitors for the first time in 2017.