

Welcome to Montenegro

Bursting at the seams with majestic mountains, breathtaking beaches and larger-than-life locals, Montenegro proves once and for all that good things do indeed come in small packages.

A Warm Welcome

It's nigh on impossible to come across a travel section without someone trumpeting Montenegro as the new 'it' destination. And though the country is rightfully reveling in the spotlight, the people remain as they've always been: candid, convivial and charming. Unlike in many other emerging destinations, hassling and scamming visitors isn't big on Montenegrins' agenda; for the most part, you're more likely to encounter a spontaneous bear hug than a bothersome tout. Whether you're chasing highland hospitality or coastal comradery, expect gregarious greetings, the shirt off your host's back and the addition of at least 5kg; these folks love to feed.

Where Land & Sea Embrace

It's not even 300km from tip to toe, but Montenegro's coastline crams in some of Europe's most spectacular seaside scenery. Mountains jut sharply from crystal-clear waters in such a way that the word 'looming' is unavoidable. Ancient walled towns cling to the rocks and dip their feet in the water like they're the ones on holiday. In summer, the whole scene is bathed in the scent of wild herbs, conifers and Mediterranean blossoms. All of this – and much, much more – is wrapped up into an area two-thirds of the size of Wales.

Go Wild

When the beaches fill up with Eastern European sunseekers, intrepid travellers can easily sidestep the hordes by getting off the beaten track in the rugged mountains of Durmitor and Prokletije, the primeval forest of Biogradska Gora, or in the many towns and villages where ordinary Montenegrins go about their daily lives. Hike, horse ride, mountain bike or kayak yourself to somewhere obscure and chances are you'll have it all to yourself. This is, after all, a country where wolves and bears still lurk in forgotten corners.

Living on the Edge

Ever since the Roman Empire split in two 1600 years ago, Montenegro has sat on the borderline between east and west. The richness of its cultural history can be seen in the mosaic floors of Roman villas, flamboyantly painted Orthodox monasteries, ornate Catholic churches, elegant minarets of mosques, and the sturdy fortresses built by the numerous powers that have fought over these lands. Then there's the legacy of 50 years as a non-aligned communist state, independent of both the Eastern Bloc and the West. For those with even a passing interest in European history, it's a fascinating place.



Why I Love Montenegro

By Tamara Sheward, Writer

If all the world's a stage, then Montenegro struts upon it, continuously playing out the most dramatic act. There's not an iota of the insipid to be found here; from its backdrop of soul-stirring mountains and captivating coastline to its passionate populace and lively, living history, this is a country with charisma. I've been knocked off my feet here more times than I can count – by the staggeringly spectacular scenery, the heartfelt backslaps walloped into me by highland giants, and the frightfully strong *rakija*. No matter how often I visit, Montenegro floors me every time.

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