

# EST SERBIA

5 days – by bus or by car

## TRAVEL PROGRAM:

**1.dan BELGRADE.** Landing at the airport Nikola Tesla. Transfer to the hotel. Dinner. Overnight stay.

**2.dan BELGRADE.** Breakfast. Departure of sightseeing city tour by bus and on foot. Belgrade, the capital of Serbia, is one of the oldest cities in Europe which has been a crucial junction since times before and a crossroad between East and West Europe. Belgrade lays on two international rivers, on the delta of Sava and Danube and the river waters surround it from three sides. Its location rightfully earned it a nickname “the gate to Balkans” and “the door of Central Europe”. The oldest archeological findings from this area date to the fifth millennia before Christ. In the historical center of Belgrade, in 1938, during the construction of Albanija Palace and where it still stands today, the remains of a Neanderthal, who died fighting a mammoth, were found. His remains were found in the vicinity, which testifies to an existence of a habitat on the territory of today’s Belgrade even in the prehistoric times. On the river bank of Danube a prehistoric settlement Vinca can be found, with the remains of artifacts of a prehistoric man. A Celtic tribe has founded Singidunum in 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC and the city is even mentioned in some ancient sources. Later on, this territory was occupied by Romans and with the division of the empire in year 395 it becomes a part of Byzantine Empire. In the 6<sup>th</sup> century the Slavs have started crossing the river more often and then permanently stayed in this area, and so, on the rocky highland over the delta of river Sava their settlement has been created – Beli Grad – White City. The name Belgrade is mentioned for the first time in year 878. In 1403 Despot Stefan Lazarevic gets Belgrade under his administration by the use of skillful diplomatic negotiations with Hungarians whence the city receives a status of the Serbian capital for the first time. **Belgrade fort** is the oldest cultural and historic monument of Belgrade – the fortification dates since the first millennium, built originally as a palisade with ramparts made of earth that developed over the centuries. Belgrade as we know it today has developed around this monumental historical structure: bohemian quartet **Skadarlija** in the city center, **Konak kneginje Ljubice** – the construction of the Konak kneginje Ljubice has started in 1829, and finished in 1830, and today it is one of the rare examples of the urban architecture of that period, **Kapetan Misino zdanje** – one of the most known structures of the nineteenth century Belgrade, where the University of Belgrade and a part of Faculty of Philosophy are situated today, built in the period from 1857 until 1863, according to construction plans of the Check architect Jan Nevol. After the construction has finished, captain Misa has donated the building to his country for the educational purposes, **the Old court** located in the Kralja Milana Street this representative building in Belgrade that was erected by King Milan Obrenovic between 1881 and 1884. King Petar I Karadjordjevic has lived in the old court between year 1903 and 1921, and between 1921 and 1922 king Aleksandar I, while today this magnificent building serves as the Belgrade city council. **The New court** is a majestic building that has housed the headquarters of the Presidency of the Republic of Serbia. As a monument it is now part of cultural heritage and therefore under the protection of the state. It was built between 1911 and 1922, when its purpose was purely residential. **National parliament building** – the first construction plan was made by Konstantin Jovanovic in 1891. However, because of the political events and economic conditions the construction of the building was postponed for a few years, and then it was entrusted to architect Jovan Ilkic, the winner of the newly announced competition for the National Parliament building competition. The official starting date of the construction has been marked by a foundation laying ceremony on the 27<sup>th</sup> of August 1907 in the presence of the King Petar I Karadjordjevic and the heir to the throne Djordje, members of parliament and diplomatic core. **The church of Saint Sava** – is the biggest Serbian orthodox temple on the Balkans and it is built on the spot where Pasha Kodza Sinan had supposedly burnt the remains of Saint Sava, the founder of the Serbian Orthodox Church. The construction started on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September 1935, when the patriarch Varnava blessed the foundations. **Saint Marko’s Church** was built between 1931 and 1940 but the breaking out of the Second World War disrupted it. During that period only the core constructions have been finalized on the Saint Marko’s Church, and it was built in a Serbian – Byzantine style, by Gracanica model. **Lunch.** Departure for Zemun. Once a separate town, and today one of the districts within the City of Belgrade, this location was first inhabited by a Celtic tribe Skordians in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC and they named it Taurunum. The highest altitude point in Zemun is the hill Gardos, from which a beautiful panorama of whole of Zemun, Danube and Belgrade center can be seen. Also, a Millennium tower tall 36 meters can be found there, also known as the Tower of Sibirjanin Janko, which was erected in 1896 by Hungarian authorities. The area around Gardos is famous by its narrow, cobblestone streets and specific architecture. At the bottom of the hill on the walk along the Danube quay numerous restaurants with live music, cafes and clubs are situated. This is a famous walk, meeting point of the local fishermen and artists, along the boat marinas and art galleries. Belgrade keeps so many secrets and one of them hides a whole city beneath the surface, more than hundreds of caves, channels, and tunnels tell the story about its connection to the empires and states that ruled these lands over the centuries. In the 5<sup>th</sup> century the fortress was destroyed by the Huns and in the early Middle Ages an invasion of barbaric tribes came to pass. Legend says that Attila the Hun’s grave lays on the delta of Sava and Danube, more precisely in the hearth of the fortress. The historians claim that the first tavern in Europe was opened right here on Dorcol in 1522. At the time, only black coffee was served and hence it is suggested that this is where this Serbian word comes from (kafana). Because of its strategic location on the delta of two rivers, between the East and the West, the White City had always been a fertile ground for historical events. The area around Belgrade witnessed battles from 115 wars and the very city was leveled an amazing 44 times. Return to the hotel.

**Dinner.** Overnight stay.

**3. day BEOGRAD - VIMINACIJUM - GOLUBAC - RAJKOVA CAVE- LEPENSKI VIR (250 km).** **Breakfast.** The military camp at **Viminacijum** certainly came into existence when the Roman Empire spread to the Danube area. This probably happened during the early decades of the 1st century AD when the Romans first reached the Danube. The civilian settlement next to the military camp in times of Hadrian’s rule (117–

138) was granted municipal status, a town with a high level of autonomy. During the reign of Gordian III (239) the town was accorded the status of a Roman citizen colony and the right to mint local currency. Such a status was the highest that could be attained by a town in the Roman Empire. Viminacium was often chosen as a mustering point for troops and a starting point in many a military campaign. The economy of Viminacium developed quickly thanks to its location on the Danube. The exceptional finds made in the necropolises around the town (more than 14,000 graves have been found so far) confirm the belief that its citizens were very wealthy, and frescoes found in the crypts represent the peak of late classical period art. The town was devastated on several occasions, in invasions by the Goths, Huns and finally the Avars. In and around the town there have been discoveries of an amphitheater, monumental buildings, lavish thermae (baths) and the remains of a highly-developed infrastructure, first and foremost streets, aqueducts and a sewage system. The discoveries made so far have very much affirmed the special significance of Viminacium as the leading Roman Metropolis on this part of the Danube Limes. A science – research center Domus Scientiarum in Viminacium is a multitask facility – apart from the fact that scientist from Serbia and all over the world will use its cabinets, libraries, atriums for their research, work with students, summer schools, organization of congresses and thematic gatherings – at the same time it serves as an accommodation for tourists that increasingly show interest for staying at Viminacium. Domus Scientiarum represents the peak of the offer in the archeological tourism, with the unique atmosphere of the ancient Rome, where the visitor can be anything they want – an archeologist, a legionnaire or the emperor. **Lunch.** Continuation of the tour towards **Golubac**. The eught sided hat tower is the symbol protector of Golubac. It was mentioned for the first time in 1335 as a Hungarian military fortification, bur the exact time of its creation is unknown, and neither who constructed it. Byzantines needed it to fortify their borders in the north, Hungarians to secure their estates on the other side of Danube, and Serbs to protect them from the Hungarian raids. Because of its location it was a target of many conquerors over the years and ground of many conflicts. The fort is composed of three parts: front, back and the upper city with the citadel. There are 10 towers in total and two gates. There was a civilian settlement in front of the fort, some partially examined structures prove that. During the medieval period numerous battles took place here, namely between the Ottoman Empire and the Kingdom of Hungary and since 1867 it was surrendered to the Serbian Knez Mihailo Obrenovic. Departure for **Rajkova cave**. The Legend says that it was around 1800's when on the main road from Majdanpek to Donji Milanovac was scurged by Vojvoda Rajko. By day Rajko was an innkeeper and by night he robbed Turkish caravans. Since he couldn't carry all of the loot, he used to hide it in the nearby cave that no one visited. This is where the name of this most important tourist attraction of Majdanpek comes from as well as a priceless natural treasure of Serbia, Rajko's cave. This cave is one of the most interesting in our country – a dome of calcite vastness, one and a half square kilometer in surface, through which flows Rajkova River. Not far from the cave entrance, at the delta of rivers Vojvodina and Paskova, very important in Wallachia rituals, Mali Pek is created, a stream rich in gold that tourists like to visit and try their luck. Whoever visited Rajkova cave stopped to see Egyptian goddess and crystal hall. Unforgettable ornaments are also found in the Hall of innocence, that no one could come close to and the Hall of Fertility rich in ornaments that remind of symbol of masculinity. Continuation of the trip towards **Lepenski Vir**. This is a spectacular archeological finding in the East Europe that is considered the “the cradle of Europe”. Lepenski Vir is the name of a giant whirlpool in the middle of Danube next to Djerdapska gorge, also called “the iron gate”. Archeological site Lepenski vir is situated in the Djerdapska gorge, on the lower Danube terrace. It is a center of one of the most significant prehistoric cultures. Lepenski Vir is a Mesozoic archeological complex, which means that it dates from the mid Stone Age. Lepenski Vir was populated by the first stockbreeders in Europe some 8000 years BC. On the site of Lepenski Vir the remains of the sacral architecture were discovered dating between 6500 and 5500 BC. In the middle of the settlement a great square was situated where people performed various rituals. Based on the shape and the proportion of the settlement it can be determined that the creators of Lepenski Vir used certain mathematical knowledge. Lepenski Vir is the most famous by perfectly carved stone statues of people with big eyes, fishlike mouths, probably for the purpose of worshiping the idols od hunt and fishing, remains of jewelry and tools made of bones and stone were found, as well as some engraved plaques with symbols and signs that most likely represent the basic writings of the human kind /Vinca writings/. Arrival at the hotel. **Dinner.** Overnight stay.

**4. day LEPENSKI VIR - ZAJECAR - FELIX ROMULIANA - RESAVSKA CAVE - ARANDJELOVAC (360 km). Breakfast.** Departure for Zajecar. Sightseeing of the **Felix Romuliana** site which is an imperial palace constructed after the idea of Roman emperor Galerije Maksymilian, on the vas plateau of Gamzigrad, in the vicinity of Zajecar. Galerius, originating from this area built this palace in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century for him and his mother Romula, after whom it was named. It falls under a specific category of Roman palace architecture linked solely to the tetrarchy period and it represents the model of this type of architecture. The palace is surrounded by thick walls that protected the very city – palace from the intrusion of the barbarians. The remains of the older and more recent fortification were discovered, constructed within the timeframe of about ten years. The area between the East and West gate inside the walls was divided into two parts for two different purposes. The northern half was for the imperial palace, a small temple and a monumental altar, while on the southern half some facilities for the public use can be found. (a big temple with two square based crypts and bathrooms) and also the facilities for servicing the palace (horreum and a single nave structure with a porticulis). The structures were abundantly decorated with frescoes, straw ceilings, floor mosaics with figures and geometric patterns. Since the first decade of the 4<sup>th</sup> century until the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> the name, the appearance and the purpose of the complex were being changed. Already in the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, Romuliana palace is abandoned and falls in ruins, and after the outbreak of Gothic tribes and Huns it becomes a small Byzantine village called Romiliana and is found on the list of the towns reconstructed during the rule of Justinian. Gamzigrad castle has last been inhabited in the 11<sup>th</sup> century as a fortified Slavic town. Site Gamzigrad - Romulijana was in 2007. Accepted on the list of the world cultural heritage sites by UNESCO. **Lunch.** Departure for **Resavska cave** which is one of the oldest caves in the country. It is 80 million years old, and the older ornaments are estimated to date since 45 million years ago. The cave was created before the great ice age by the subterranean rivers that had cut their path in the limestone terrain. The cave was discovered in 1952 even though some of the local shepards already knew of its existence, hiding with the sheep to be protected from the elements. It was opened to public in 1972. The cave is 4,5 kilometers long and it was researched in detail on the distance of 2830 m, and for the visitors an 800 m is accommodated. Temperature in the cave is constant throughout the year and it is of +7°C, while the humidity varies from 80 to 100%. The interior of the Resava cave abounds with numerous chambers, canals, galleries, columns, stalactites, stalagmites, draperies and stone waterfalls. Colorful ornaments can be seen at the very entrance that is located at 485 meters above sea level. Ornaments were created by dissolution of calcium carbonate and their color depends on the minerals that the water had gone through. It appears in three colors – red, yellow and white. The red color is the most dominant and it comes from the iron oxide, the white color comes from crystal calcium and yellow ornaments are from clay traces. Visitors move through the cave along a spiral concrete path in one direction. The trail passes through various halls, on two levels (upper and lower), and the lowest point opened for visitors is at 405 m above sea level. In the upper gallery four halls can be visited. The first one is “the Hall of joined columns or colonnades”, which got its name from the columns which have merged to connect roof to floor and are composed of yellowish calcite. In the second “the Beehive Hall”, the ceiling is covered by the stalactites that are still forming. The second and third halls are connected by a tunnel of red breccia which, in Serbia, can only be found in the Resava cave. The Canyon Channel is the driest part of the cave and has no formations as the ceiling. In the middle of the

channel there is an abyss "the blind tunnel", 25 m long, that is examined but not arranged for visitations. The canyon channel reaches the third hall "the Entrance Hall of History". It was named after the tools found on the spot (a stone axe and spear-heads), the skull of an arctic fox and a prehistoric human fireplace. Shorter tunnels lead to the "Path of the Flowstone Waterfalls" and "the Organ". This hall is very acoustic and two crystal white sculptures called "Grandma" and "Grandpa" can be seen here. A longer, artificial tunnel leads to the fourth hall – the Crystal Hall, where the cave formations known as the "Hung Sheep" and "Elephant's Foot" can be seen. The indentation in the wall has been created by the merging of stalactites and stalagmites and it is called "the Bell" or "the Cage". Continuation of the tour towards Arandjelovac. Arrival at the hotel.

**Dinner.** Overnight stay.

**5. day ARANDJELOVAC - TOPOLA - OPLENAC - BELGRADE (100 km).** **Brakfast.** Outstanding geographical position of a small town of **Topola**, has created conditions for this miniature settlement of Sumadija to become political and administrative center of the liberated part of Serbia in the times of Karadjordje. Soon after taking up the duties of a king in 1903, King Petar I Karadjodjevic started fulfilling a promise given by his parents to build a mausoleum for the Karadjordjevic dynasty. Financing it out of his own funds guided by numerous, similar mausoleums of European rulers the mausoleum also reflects Orthodox Christian traditions. The king chose the very top of the hill, so called Little Oplenac. The Temple of Saint Djordje and the mausoleum of Karadjordjevic dynasty is constructed on the very top of this shady hill of Oplenac. **Lunch.** Departure for Belgrade. Arrival in Belgrade.

PUTNIK TRAVEL