

WEST 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 3rd 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 6th 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 Czech 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 27th 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 15th 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 3rd 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 Sibinjanin 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 5th 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 BELGRADE - TOPOLA/OPLENAC – SERBIAN MOUNT ATHOS - SIROGOJNO - ZLATIBOR (240 km). Breakfast. 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 Karadjordjevic 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. Continuation of the tour towards Ovčarsko-Kablarska gorge. On the way between Cacak and Uzice, in the picturesque gorge of West Morava, on and under the mountains of Ovcar and Kablar, **Serbian Mount Athos** can be found. In this gorge 12 relics found their home. On the left bank of West Morava, under the Kablar mountain are following monasteries: Blagovestenje, Ilinje, Jovanje, Nikolje i Uspenje, and under the Ovcarom: Vavedenje, Vaznesenje, Preobrazenje, Sveta Trojica i Sretenje. Ilinje is the only unrestored monastery, while the others enjoy a true renaissance of orthodoxy – filled with the prayers of the monks, and are the locations of pilgrimage and tourist visits. By the monasteries, in the same area, two more shrines can be found: church of Saint Sava and Kadjenica cave, a unique holy memorial site. Most of these monasteries were constructed during the ottoman occupation, when the orthodox worshipers retreated into the mountains, in the recluse and remote parts of the land. Tour of the monastery Blagovestenje, located over Ovčar Banja, at the foot of Kablar Mountain. It is speculated that it dates since the times of Nemanjici. For the most part of its history, this monastery was a fully functional church apart from the time when it had to be abandoned because dilapidation. In the 19th century Joakim Vujic founds it burnt by the Turks. In this monastery Patriarch Pavle took oath. Tour of the monastery Sveta Trojica, in silence which is required for the deep state of constant prayer. Monastery Sveta Trojica is situated on the slopes of Ovcar. The oldest record of this monastery dates since 1594/95. Church is single nave structure, and the Raska architecture school influence can be seen. By its architecture it is the most beautiful of all monasteries in the Ovcaro - Kablarska gorge. **Lunch.** Continuation of the tour towards **Sirogojno** and visiting the museum “Staro selo”- a museum in the open that shows the architecture and interior of the buildings, the manner of works and the organization of family life. It spreads on the area of 5 hectares and counts around 50 exhibits that are dislocated and moved from the surrounding Zlatibor villages. A monument complex of the Church Saint Apostles Petar and Pavle from 18th century and the museum in the open “Staro selo” from 1983 has been put under the protection of the law as the heritage of an exceptional cultural importance. Continuation of the tour towards **Zlatibor**, the most popular mountain in Serbia on all accounts, an attribute given by many things that promotes it as such, in our country but also in Europe and the world. Mild sunny summers, mild sunny winters, the most beautiful springs and warm autumns are the reason of tourist activity throughout the year. Zlatibor is a healing spa, a sports center, ski center, center for cultural events and gathering of people from all sides of the country. It has numerous picnic areas and it is well connected to neighbouring tourist destinations, Drvengrad, Sargan eight, Visegrad, Tara, Drina regatta, Tornik. Arrival at the hotel.

Dinner. Overnight stay.

4. day ZLATIBOR - SARGAN EIGHT- TARA (80 km). Breakfast. Continuation of the tour. **Sargan eight** is the most attractive tourist – museum railway in Europe among the narrow-gauge railways. It is a masterpiece of the world industrial heritage. Built in the period from 1921 until 1925, the planners have solved the altitude difference between Mokra Gora and Sargan (300 meters of altitude, 3,5 kilometers long) by the famous “eight” loop, spreading over 13,5 kilometers, above the base of Jatara, with around twenty tunnels, several bridges and viaducts that consist most of this railway. The train “Cira” has released its first puffs of smoke back in 1925, and it made its last eight loop on the 28th of February 1974, when the railway was closed. ZTP Beograd has started the reconstruction of the Sargan eight in 1999 for touristic purposes and to this day the whole track was reconstructed, with the authentic station structures and with the original cars. The composition Nostalgija is composed of two locomotives and three cars and the panoramic car is in the service of touristic rides, and the stations Jatara and Mokra Gora are adapted for the touristic purposes into facilities in which tourists can relax and refresh themselves during the ride. The ride of the Sargan eight had its appeal in the times when it worked as a regular train line. The steam engine pushed through narrow shady passages and high carves between Sargan and Mokra Gora, on the route that traces an unusual line in the shape of number eight, from more than one spot the passengers had an opportunity to see three tail tracks in different level. Many would panic when they saw a train coming up in front of them, needlessly because there was no danger. The other train was in their own separate rail tracks. Traveling the route of the famous “eight”, spread over 13, 5 km, the passenger is practically unable to determine which way the train already passed and which portions are yet to come. Far from the stress of the modern life, rich in nature and natural beauty of this area, this railway, unique in Europe, revives the romantic spirits of the old days by the sound of its steam locomotive. Wildlife surroundings, zigzagging down the bends and turns, tunnels. An adventure that maintains almost forgotten warmth of a bumpy train ride. **Lunch.** Departure for Tara. Mountain Tara has got its name from the Illyrian highlander tribe Autariatae, which lived on its slopes in the Bronze Age. Judging by the diversity and the abundance of the tourist values, preserved ecosystems, mountain relief with a moderate altitude of 800-1500 m, good terrain for winter sports, rich and diverse flora and fauna, mild climate, Drina with its artificial lakes Zaovine and Perucac, give this mountain a great touristic value which rises it to the rank of other famous mountains in Serbia like Zlatibor. Tara is since the 13th of July 1981 a national park, status given by the Parliament of SR Serbia and it spreads on the surface of 24.991,82 hectares. The care of the most beautiful mountain of Western Serbia was entrusted to JP National Park Tara in 1981. It is suggested that the limestone found on the northern slopes of Tara are in fact the shores of the Pannonian Sea in the ancient epochs. Because of the mild climate and the inaccessibility a Serbian spruce, a relic and endemic species native to the Balkan peninsula has survived, as well as many other natural monuments, mildly put – the living fossils. Arrival at the hotel. Free time. **Dinner.** Overnight stay.

5. day TARA – CRUISE ON DRINA RIVER- BELGRADE (170 km). Breakfast. Departure for Perucac – tourist town 13 km away from Bajina Basta, situated on the right riverbank of Drina. In the vicinity you can see a dam of a hydroelectric power station, where the lake starts, 54 km long, whose magnificent canyon spreads all the way to Visegrad. On this 52 km long cruise you will enjoy in the beauty of the nature, in the habitats of plant and animal species of the Tara National Park, in delta of rivers Zepa and Drina, we will pass through the most narrow part of the canyon, through Stari Brod campsite, next to the minor streams and rivers, medieval fortifications... On the right and partly on the left bank of Drina, on the both sides of Rzava, that joins Drina in a delta, on the east of Bosnia and Herzegovina lays Visegrad city. The biggest attraction of this city represents a bridge over Drina, that Mehmed-pasha Sokolovic built in 1571 and which was described by Ivo Andric in his Nobel prize winning novel The Bridge on the Drina. Since 2014 Andricgrad is opened for visitors, a tourist complex was created as an idea of a director Emir Kusturica inspired by the work and characters of Nobel Prize winner Ivo Andric. The city

was built of stone and represents the mixture of different periods and styles that came and went during the history of these parts: Byzantine, Ottoman, Renaissance, Classicism. Cruise down the river that turns and cuts the ground, enjoying the green color that rests the eyes and introduces a true piece in the soul of the observer. The road ends at the hydroelectric power station which is the cause of creation of the artificial lake Perucac. The creation of this artificial lake did not disturb the primal beauty of this land, but it complemented the postcard of Bajina Basta. **Lunch.** Departure for Belgrade at 18.30. Arrival in Belgrade around midnight.

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