

Code **EEEX** **Eastern Europe Experience**

Duration: 12 Days Route: Sofia to Dubrovnik Style: Adventure Tours



[Bulgaria](#), [Macedonia](#), [Albania](#), [Montenegro](#), [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#), [Croatia](#)

Beyond the well-trodden tourist trail, Eastern Europe has plenty to offer travellers in search of adventure. This short but sweet tour gives you the chance to sample some of the popular and lesser known areas of the Balkan Peninsula and nearby nations. Join us for an Eastern Europe Experience you'll never forget.

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## Tour Dossier Introduction

**Dossier Last Updated:** 12-12-2012

**Tour Code:** EEEX

**Duration:** 11 nights / 12 days

**Joining City:** Sofia

**Departure City:** Dubrovnik

**Nearest Joining International Airport:** Sofia International Airport EAD (SOF)

**Nearest Departing International Airport:** Dubrovnik Airport (DBV)

This dossier is designed for this particular tour and should be read in conjunction with the country dossier(s), regional pre-departure booklet and optional excursions guides relevant to your itinerary. You will also receive a joining letter in advance of your journey with further information, while last minute updates may be posted in the Latest News section of our website.

## Tour Documents

 PDF Document  Web Page

-  [Joining Letter for Tours Beginning in Sofia](#)
-  [Optional Excursions Guide for Tours to Eastern Europe](#)
-  [Albania Dossier](#)
-  [Bosnia and Herzegovina Dossier](#)
-  [Bulgaria Dossier](#)
-  [Croatia Dossier](#)
-  [Macedonia Dossier](#)
-  [Montenegro Dossier](#)
-  [Sofia City Map](#)



## Inclusions

**Accommodation:** 11 night(s) in hotel(s), hostel(s) & guesthouse(s)

**Meals:** 6 breakfast(s)

**Excursions:** Lake Ohrid, Kruja, Ostrog Monastery, Kotor

**Transport:** Local public bus, taxi, on foot

**Age:** 18-60, max. 70 (recommended)

**Group:** Average 8-12

**Staff:** Tucan Travel tour leader, local guides

## Exclusions

- International flights and departure taxes
- Domestic flight taxes if applicable (approximately US\$5 each)
- Tips on included excursions, visas, travel insurance, personal items
- Pre & post tour accommodation
- Airport transfers
- Spending money – allow approximately US\$25-\$30 per day to cover meals, snacks, drinks, limited souvenirs, laundry, tips and any extras
- Optional excursions - Please see our optional excursions guide on the dossier page for a comprehensive list of optional activities and excursions available on this tour.

## Detailed Itinerary

### Day 1 to 1 - Arrive Sofia

The first day of your tour is simply an arrival day with no pre-organised activities. In order to allow time to relax and see some of the sights you may wish to add pre tour accommodation. On arrival please ask at the reception for information on when the pre departure meeting will be held.

Bulgaria's capital Sofia offers a wealth of cultural entertainment, including Byzantine churches, museums full of ancient archaeological treasures, towering monuments and numerous mineral baths adjacent to the magnificent Mount Vitosha. Laid back and cosmopolitan, Sofia offers a thriving and diverse street life, including open-air cafés, busy markets such as the famous Ladies' Market, rattling trams and buskers all adding to the ambience. At the foothills of Mount Vitosha about 8 kilometres from the city centre you can visit the 900 year-old Boyana Church, which features murals and frescoes dating back to 1259 AD, considered among the masterpieces of medieval European painting, medieval architecture and monumental art. Also at the base of Mt. Vitosha is the splendid National History Museum, with antiques dating back to the Thracian period.

Sofia also offers many beautiful gardens to relax in, such as Boris Gardens and the South Park, which starts just behind the Palace of Culture.

### Day 2 to 5 - Skopje – Lake Ohrid – Tirana

In Skopje, Macedonia's capital, you can enjoy 2,000 years of history spanning Oriental and Western cultures, neatly divided by the Vardar River through the centre of the city. Skopje has many historical monuments including the Kale Fortress dating back to the 6th century, the Daud Paša Amam, a 15th century bathhouse now converted into the city art gallery. You can also see the Mustafa-pasha's mosque, the 16th century Clock Tower and the Kamen Most (Stone Bridge) over the Vardar River.

Continuing on, we have time to stretch our legs at Lake Ohrid. Straddling the border between Macedonia and Albania, Lake Ohrid is one of Europe's oldest and deepest lakes, harbouring 200 species unique to the area, right across the food chain. Listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1979, the turquoise coloured lake covers an area of 360 square kilometres with a maximum depth of 288 metres. The nearby settlement of Ohrid is one of the oldest in Europe.

We then head to Tirana, the trendy capital and largest city of Albania, which has transformed from a grey, dismal ex-communist city, isolated by the regime until the 1990s, to a colourful capital buzzing with life. While the city has a long history, you can enjoy its modern outlook, with fashionable bars, clubs and boutiques, and wander boulevards lined with relics of the city's Ottoman, Italian and communist past. Tirana's massive main square, Sheshi Skënderbej, is bordered by the National History Museum, the Palace of Culture, the National Bank, the Et'hem Bey Mosque and Skanderbeg's statue. A short bus ride from the centre city, the Martyr's Cemetery offers marvellous panoramic views over the city. If time allows we may have an opportunity for a morning trip to Kruja, to see the castle and home of Skanderberg and Ottoman market place before our onward journey.

## Day 6 to 10 - Budva – Sarajevo – Mostar

Our next visit is to the seaside town of Budva in Montenegro. Budva (not to be confused with the Czech beer Budvar) is 2,500 years old, one of the oldest and most popular settlements on the Adriatic coast of Montenegro. This vibrant seaside town is well known for its sandy beaches, historic old town, diverse nightlife, and beautiful examples of Mediterranean architecture.

We will take a day trip to the picturesque Kotor, a walled city nestled at the bottom of Europe's deepest fjord. Stari Grad, the old town, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, with a tricky labyrinth of cobbled alleys, squares and ancient churches, including St Tryphon's Cathedral built in 1166. The mountains provide a dramatic backdrop to this beautiful town as they come down steeply, almost to the waterfront. You could spend the day drinking espresso in the shade of the medieval walls watching people go by. You can climb the walls of the ancient fort of Sveti Ivan which spans some 4.5 kilometres above the city on almost vertical cliffs. Your efforts will be rewarded by an excellent view of Kotor and the bay.

We will visit Ostrog Monastery, clinging precariously to an almost vertical cliff face. Ostrog Monastery is a famous Serbian Orthodox Church built in the 17th century to honour one of the four Montenegrin saints, Vasilije Jovanovic, who fled here from the Turks in 1665. The greatest spiritual centre of Montenegro and the most visited Orthodox shrine in the Balkans, the sanctuary still attracts pilgrims who hope to cure their illnesses and other problems by praying over his remains. You may also have time to take in the Old Royal Capital of Cetinje, visiting the Monastery and many museums showcasing some of Montenegro's prosperous past.

Crossing the border into the 'heart-shaped land' of Bosnia and Herzegovina we visit the capital Sarajevo, a fascinating mixture of western and eastern cultures. Known as the 'Jerusalem of Europe', the city was once famous for its religious diversity, with people of Islamic, Orthodox Christian, Catholic and Jewish faiths coexisting relatively peacefully for centuries. The atmosphere of calm and tolerance changed dramatically when violence erupted in the mid 1990s and the city underwent the longest siege in modern military history during the Yugoslav War.

Today the city is largely recovered and is packed with fascinating museums, bazaars, markets and bridges. During your time here you could explore the cobbled streets, mosques and Oriental style shops of the Old Town, visit the Bosnian Historical Museum to learn about the siege of Sarajevo and visit the Sarajevo Tunnel Museum, the tunnel which was used to ferry supplies into the besieged city during the conflict, next to the airport. For history buffs a must see is the "Latin Bridge" spanning the river in the down-town area. The bridge bears a plaque commemorating the assassination of Archduke of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Franz Ferdinand, the event that sparked the beginning of World War I.

Widely felt to be the prettiest city in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mostar is situated on the Neretva river and is the fifth-largest city in the country. Mostar was named after "the bridge keepers" (natively: mostari) who kept the Stari Most (Old Bridge) over Neretva river. The city is particularly famous for this beautiful single span bridge, Stari Most, which collapsed into the Neretva River during the Yugoslav War in 1993. Built in 1556 by the Ottoman ruler Suleiman the Great, Stari Most had been a globally recognised landmark and a national symbol for Bosnia-Herzegovina. It had survived centuries of conflict including both world wars and proved that, whatever happened, the mainly Christian west bank and mainly Muslim east remained united. The destruction of the bridge was a huge blow to the local people, but in 2004 the bridge was rebuilt as a replica of the original using pieces of masonry salvaged from the riverbed. Its reopening represented the hope that Muslims, Croats and Serbs could once again live side by side and that Mostar would be healed after a decade of ethnic division.

## Day 11 to 11 - Dubrovnik

Into the south of Croatia, we visit the 'Pearl of the Adriatic', the UNESCO World Heritage listed walled city of Dubrovnik.

With a paved town centre enclosed in fortress-like 13th century stone walls, the city is easy to explore on foot and is full of character. A great start to your exploration of Dubrovnik could be with a walk around the city walls. Stretching almost 2 kilometres around the old town, the walls offer stunning rooftop and city views out to the turquoise blue Adriatic Sea. Founded in the 7th century, for a time in its glorious past the city was a serious rival for Venice in terms of maritime trade. It is hard to believe now but in 1991, two out of every three buildings were damaged during the bombardment of the Yugoslav War. Since then the buildings and walls have been painstakingly restored to pristine condition and represents one of the most beautiful and solid fortress systems on the Mediterranean. There are several other historic attractions worth a visit near the main street (Stradun), such as the 14th century Franciscan monastery which houses a treasury full of sacred art and artefacts, as well as one of the oldest continually working pharmacies in the world, dating back to 1317.

## Day 12 to 12 - Depart Dubrovnik

Your adventure of a lifetime comes to an end today, please confirm with the reception the check out time. If you have a late flight or have lengthened your stay by adding post tour accommodation you will have more time to explore the sights.

The itinerary listed above is to be used as a guide only. Occasionally we may need to update this document and it may be different to the information printed in our current brochure. Tour leaders may need to make adjustments due to unforeseen circumstances during the tour. It is very important that you visit our website and review a copy of this dossier as close as possible to your departure date in case of changes that may affect your plans. Any last minute changes may also be posted in the latest news section of our website.

## Extra Services – pre & post tour accommodation and airport transfers

Very little time is spent in each of the starting and finishing cities and you will need to allow a few days at the beginning or end of your tour if you want to explore them further. Airport transfers in joining and departing cities are not included in the tour price but can be booked through Tucan Travel at an additional cost. For details about how to book pre & post accommodation please refer to the Extra Services information page in our website. Price information can be found on the price page of each tour. If you would prefer to make your own way to and from your hotel, you can find further details on the joining letter for this tour.

## Single Supplements

This package may offer single supplements that enable clients to stay in a single room. This single supplement must be paid prior to departure and applies to the whole tour for nights where single rooms can be made available. If there is no offer for a single room this is usually because you will be on an overnight train or bus, or camping.

In the day-by-day grid below an 'S' will indicate in which destinations single rooms are available to those who have purchased a single supplement.

## Day by Day Itinerary

Day	Activity	Country	Meals	Single Room
Day 1	Sofia	Bulgaria		
Day 2	Skopje	Macedonia	B	S
Day 3	Lake Ohrid		B	S
Day 4	Lake Ohrid		B	S
Day 5	Tirana	Albania	B	S
Day 6	Budva	Montenegro	B	S
Day 7	Budva		B	S
Day 8	Sarajevo	Bosnia and Herzegovina		S
Day 9	Sarajevo			S
Day 10	Mostar			S
Day 11	Dubrovnik	Croatia		
Day 12	Dubrovnik			

(B - Breakfast, L - Lunch, D - Dinner included)

Please note the day to day itinerary above is given as a GUIDELINE ONLY.

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