

APOLLONIA



FIER, ALBANIA



Tourism Development and Promotion Project

Western Balkans Crossroad of Civilisations

APOLLONIA

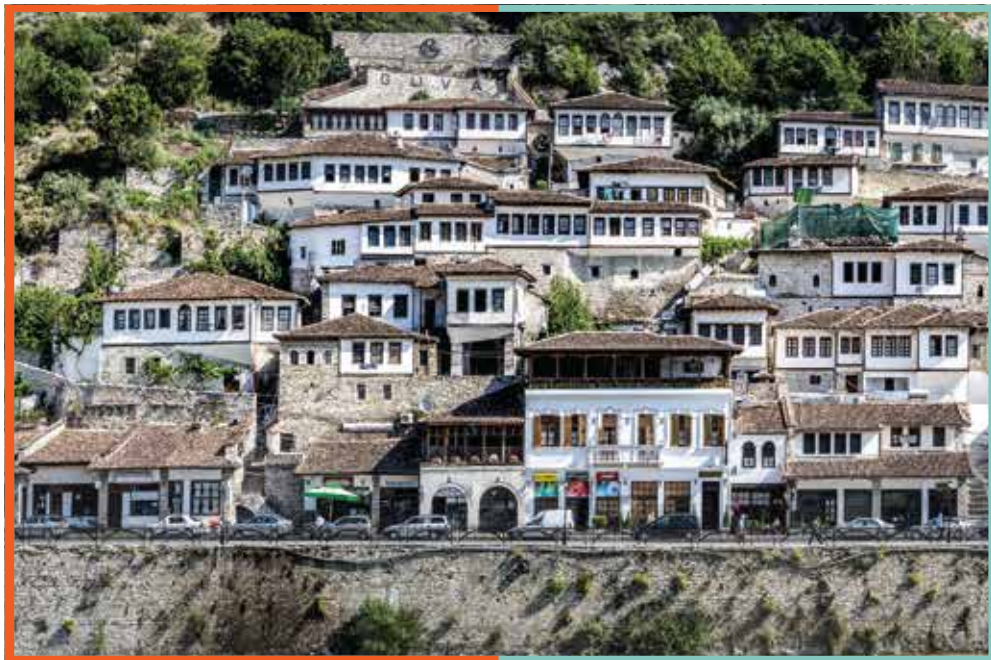
For thousands of years the Western Balkans built its identity on a lavish cultural heritage developed by a myriad of civilisations, which attempted to conquer and rule this stunning corner of Europe.

Here you will witness Roman influence on Byzantine churches, Byzantine influence on Ottoman mosques, Ottoman influence on Austro-Hungarian architecture.

For the West, the Balkan was where the Orient began, and for the East it was the gateway to Europe.

The mesmerizing landscape of the archaeological park of the ancient city of Apollonia represents a mixture of unique monuments and nature. The city flourished during the 4th century AD as an important economic and trade centre. Apollonia was the doorway of Hellenistic culture into the region, a merging point of Greeks and Illyrians. The city became one of the most important gateways of the trans-Balkan Roman highway - Via Egnatia, the road which linked western and eastern Mediterranean.

BERAT HISTORIC CENTRE



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BERAT HISTORIC CENTRE

Berat, known also as the White city, is an ancient stronghold and merchant city in a historic region of Epirus. It bears witness to the coexistence of various religious and cultural communities down the centuries, from classical antiquity to Ottoman era, visible on castles, religious and vernacular architecture. The historic centre features the castle, most of which was built in the 13th century; however, its origins date back to the 4th century BC. Berat was a fortified but open town, inhabited by craftsmen and merchants who have created a vivid Mediterranean society.

SARAJEVO HISTORIC CENTER



SARAJEVO, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



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SARAJEVO HISTORIC CENTRE

The charming Sarajevo, with its blend of east and west architecture, was founded as an Ottoman city by Isa-Beg Ishaković, the first governor of Bosnia. He transformed the cluster of villages into a city and state capital by constructing a number of key structures, including a mosque, a closed marketplace, a public bath, a hostel, and of course the governor's castle ("Saraj") which gave the city its current name. At the peak of the Ottoman Empire, Sarajevo was the biggest and most important Ottoman city in the Balkans. The west influence is reflected in the Austro-Hungarian architecture, following the occupation of Bosnia by the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1878 when Sarajevo started to become a blend of the remaining Ottoman bazaar and contemporary western architecture.

MOSTAR HISTORIC CORE



MOSTAR, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



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Where the old Roman Adriatic road crosses the deep valley of Neretva River lays Mostar, a city developed in 15th and 16th century as an Ottoman frontier town, famous after the bridge around which it grew. A centre of the historic region of Herzegovina, it was a place where merchants from Istanbul and beyond met their counterparts from Dubrovnik and Venice. The Austro-Hungarian rule after 1878 introduced a lively urban development in Mostar, creating reforms in city planning and significant investments in infrastructure and housing. Today, Mostar neighbourhoods are an outstanding example of a multicultural urban settlement.

VUSHTRRI HAMMAM



VUSHTRRI/VUČITRN, KOSOVO®



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VUSHTRRI/VUČITRN HAMMAM

The hammam in Vushtrri lies in the city centre and consists of construction structures with layers of different historical periods. This hammam from 15th century is known as one of the earliest hammams in the Balkans. It served as a public bath for both men and women, who used this bathhouse separately on the designated days. This hammam was used for such purpose until the late '70s.

*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

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HISTORIC CENTRE OF PRIZREN



PRIZREN, KOSOVO®



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HISTORIC CENTRE OF PRIZREN

An important Byzantine and Medieval city became the regional seat of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans in 1360, when Sultan Murad I extended the empire into Europe. The most important town in Kosovo*, Prizren, lies at the gates where the White Drim canyon brings the winds of Adriatic into the fertile Kosovo* plains. Prizren's spirit, as its architecture, reflects both Christian and Islamic traditions.

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CETINJE HISTORIC CORE



CETINJE, MONTENEGRO



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CETINJE HISTORIC CORE

Hidden under the slopes of austere mountains, Cetinje was founded as a refuge for the last medieval prince of Montenegro against the Ottomans. Since late 15th century it was in the border lands of the greatest powers of east and west. Due to intensive urban development during the 19th century, Cetinje became characterizes by urban style and eclectic architecture from the Neo-Romanesque, Neo-Baroque to Art Nouveau and Cubist architectural solutions. The values of Cetinje Historic Core in synergy with the broader nature context of the Mount Lovćen, with the Mausoleum at its summit, can be defined as a specific cultural landscape.

OLD TOWN OF BAR



BAR, MONTENEGRO



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The Old Town of Bar bears witness to all civilisations of East Mediterranean. Positioned between the slopes of Rumija mountain, Adriatic sea and olive trees still today, this fortified town with ramparts, bastions, towers, citadel, numerous squares and churches, still defies the millennia which have passed. It is the largest medieval archaeological site in the Balkans with remains of 600 public and private buildings from various construction phases present in different epochs of the Mediterranean history.

BELGRADE FORTRESS



BELGRADE, SERBIA



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One of the few cities which deserves the title “the gateway to Europe” Belgrade lies where the hills of Dinaric Alps force the Danube to turn east as it exits the Pannonian plain. Belgrade stands here since the Celtic times, constantly changing fate between the fortress which guards the entrance to Central Europe and a prosperous merchant town. Belgrade Fortress of today was built in 18th century with its walls surrounding 15th century Acropolis. It consists of the old citadel (Upper and Lower Town) and Kalemegdan Park (Large and Little Kalemegdan) on the confluence of Sava and Danube rivers, in an urban area of modern Belgrade, cherishing the remains of the antiquity, Byzantine, Ottoman and Austrian legacies.

BAČ



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The town of Bač shows influences of Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, Byzantine, Islamic and Baroque styles, along with examples of vernacular architecture. The built heritage pays testimony to the cultural diversity of the area, linking the Balkans with Central and Western Europe. Some of its most iconic structures and national monuments are the Bač Fortress, the Bođani Orthodox Monastery and the Franciscan Monastery of Bač.

SKOPJE OLD TOWN



SKOPJE, NORTH MACEDONIA



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First inhabited thousands of years ago, it was an important centre of commerce during the Ottoman times when it enjoyed its peak importance, for more than five centuries starting late 14th century. The Ottoman heritage is predominant in Old Town: there are roughly 30 mosques, three caravanserais, and several hammams still standing, in addition to a clock tower and other Ottoman structures. The Old Bazaar, as called by locals, is one of the largest and best collections of Ottoman architecture and history, but also of other cultures such as classical antiquity and medieval that left their inextricable traces. Skopje is a birth place of Mother Theresa.

OHRID



OHRID, NORTH MACEDONIA



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Situated on the shores of Lake Ohrid, the town of Ohrid is one of the oldest human settlements in Europe. Built between the 7th century, it has the oldest Slav monastery, St Pantelejmon, and is broadly considered as an epicentre of early medieval Christian culture. Secluded high in the mountains next to a pristine glacial lake, Ohrid's architecture represents the best preserved and most complete ensemble of ancient urban architecture of this part of Europe.