

Important facts

CURRENCY AND COINAGE

The official currency of the country is the Serbian Dinar (RSD). However, sometimes Euros and US Dollars are accepted too, unofficially. Some Serbs tend to calculate values in Euros, due to the unstable Dinar currency. The rate is around 117 Dinars for 1 Euro.

Dinar coins: 1, 2, 5, 10, 20

Dinar bills: 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, 500, 1000, 5000

POSTAL AND AREA CODES AND CAR PLATES

The postal code of Belgrade is 11000 and the Area calling code is (+381) 011. The car plates code for Belgrade is BG.

ELECTRICITY

As in most cities of Continental Europe, the electricity voltage in Belgrade is 220V. Electrical outlets are standard European.

WATER

Tap water in Belgrade is safe to drink. However, the amount of limescale is a bit high. There are also plenty bottled water brands offering regular, mildly carbonated or highly carbonated water.

POPULATION

Serbia has a population of approximately 7 million people, according to the latest census. The population is primarily made up of ethnic Serbs, but there are also significant minority groups, including Hungarians, Bosniaks, Croats, and Romani people. The majority of the population lives in urban areas, with the capital, Belgrade, being the largest city and a major cultural and economic center.

HISTORY

Belgrade is one of the oldest capitals in the world, with over 7000 years of continuity. Due to its extraordinary location, it has attracted people since the neolithic times, and several neolithic settlements have been found throughout the city territory, the most important one being Vinča (a Danube suburb of Belgrade).

Celts have settled the city around the 4th century B.C. and named it Singidunum. Then came the Romans, developing a luxurious city over the centuries. In the 5th century A.D. it was destroyed by the Huns and later conquered and reconquered by Goths, Byzantines, Slavs, Bulgarians, Hungarians, Serbs, Turks, Austrians until it finally become Serbian again in the nineteenth century.

Since then the city grew rapidly, and the old site at Kalemegdan was converted to a park and open air museum, and the city spread in all directions. The most glorious moments of Belgrade were under the

Roman rule (around 4th century A.D.), in the early 15th century under Serbian Despot Stefan Lazarević, and in the early 18th century under Austrian rule. A very important and most visible trail was left by the “Between Wars” society of the twenties and thirties of the 20th century.

TIME ZONE

Belgrade and Serbia are in the CET (Central European Time) zone, same as most of Europe (Excluding Britain, Portugal, Romania and Greece) – UTC+1.

In summer the Daylight Saving Time (DST) moves it to CEST – UTC+2.

WORKING HOURS

Most shops work from 8 AM to 8 PM during business days and 8 or 9 AM to 3 PM on Saturdays (and Sundays). In the large shopping malls, this period is usually longer, until 10 PM for business days, and in some cases, weekends too.

Grocery stores work usually from 8 AM to 9 or 10 PM, but there are others that work 24h.

Green markets work from 8 AM to 5 PM, though many vendors leave around 3 (Sundays even earlier).

Offices usually have standard 9 AM to 5 PM working hours.

Smaller banks’ offices tend to have very weird working hours, eg. from 9:30 AM to 1:30 PM one day, to 4:30 PM other days, non-working Fridays... However, most of them have ATMs (cash machines).

WHAT TO DO IN BELGRADE IN TWO DAYS

FIRST DAY

KALEMEGDAN BELGRADE FORTRESS

Belgrade sightseeing should start in the place where every story, tale and myth about the city were made. Belgrade Fortress is the largest free attraction of the city with its gates open 24/7, all year round.

As one of the world's oldest strongholds, visit to Belgrade Fortress can be considered a unique experience. While walking across very old remains of former fortress (some of them even 600 years old) try to picture in your head life back in the old days - high towers, soldiers in trenches, horsemen bringing news to ruler, battles.

Due to its good location, lying on the ridge overlooking confluence of two big European rivers, the Sava and Danube, fortress was subject of dispute for ages. It was invaded for more than 100 times and many lives were lost. However, after Turks the last invaders left Serbia fortress slowly became huge city park and stays that until today.

If you want to make a quick visit to the fortress than take a stroll down the promenade overlooking New Belgrade, take a photo at Victor Monument and confluence of the Sava and Danube rivers, visit Military Museum and Gallery of Natural History Museum.

TAKE A BREAK! You've been walking for almost two hours, take a break in kafana "?" or in some of cafes on Kongsančićev venac.

KNEZ MIHAILOVA STREET

Knez Mihailova Street is the favorite city promenade and lies in between Terazije Square and Kalemegdan. It is the main meeting point, easy reachable from every part of the city. As epicenter of the culture and history, Knez Mihailova was named one of the most beautiful pedestrian streets in Eastern Europe.

As one of main shopping areas in the city, Knez Mihailova offers good fun while zigzagging through shops of many popular fashion brands. Also, you can enjoy a "slice" of fine secessionist architecture that can be seen in many buildings along the street and relax in cafes and restaurants.

REPUBLIC SQUARE

Republic Square is the main meeting place where you can enjoy lazy afternoon while sipping coffee in the mild autumn Sun, attend concerts, various performances or just hang around doing nothing special. Square is known after monument of Serbian Prince Mihailo on a horse and buildings of two most important cultural buildings, National Theater and National Museum (which is unfortunately closed for renovation).

SKADARLIJA

Skadarska Street or Skadarlija as Belgradians like to call it was and still is bohemian hearth of Belgrade. If you want to party in an old-fashion Serbian way, with a lot of rakija, good food and live music performed by string orchestras, than you have to visit Skadarlija. It represents the spirit of socializing in bistros and vivid nightlife as it used to be.

Visit one of old kafanas decorated in Serbian style and mostly with traditional Serbian cuisine or pay a visit to the house of notable Serbian poet Djura Jakšić. Concerts, poetry nights and exhibitions are held frequently here.

Although Skadarlija is not particularly convenient for high heels and tipsy walk, it is still very appealing among visitors of all ages.

TAKE A BREAK! At this point, you can take a break and have a lunch in Skadarlija. Taste some specialties of Serbian cuisine and have a glass of rakija to cheer yourself up.

TERAZIJE SQUARE

Terazije Square is one of the most important squares in the city. It got name after numerous water towers that stood on this place some 200 years ago. Today stands only one fountain that was built in 1860 to celebrate the second rule of Prince Miloš Obrenović. Besides being a meeting point, Terazije is gathering place for all lovers of stickers. During summer time, they come here to exchange stickers from various collector albums.

From the left and right side of the fountain stand two most important and the oldest Belgrade hotels, Balkan and Moskva.

In vicinity of Terazije Fountain stands Albania Palace, built in 1937. This building was the first Belgrade skyscraper and the tallest building in the Balkans before World War II.

REPUBLIC PARLAMENT

House of the National Assembly, better known as the Federal or Republic Parliament, is the most important state building where many important decisions were made (good and bad). Parliament building, designed in a neoclassical style, was erected in 1936. During the 90s, this building was symbol of instability and bad ideology.

Parliament stands today not only as a House of Assembly, but also as a monument of culture since the most famous architects, designers and artist of their time took part in design of Parliament. Special attentions should be paid to the sculpture "Play of Black Horses" that stands in front of the Parliament entrance. Sculpture was made by Serbian sculpture Toma Rosandić.

OLD AND NEW COURTS

Former Royal Courts (known as Old and New) lie opposite to Republic Parliament and next to Pionirski Park. Old Court was built in style of academism between 1882 and 1884 and used by Obrenović ruling dynasty. In the time of construction, it was supposed to be larger than any other Serbian ruling residence. Even today, Old Court is considered one of the finest and most beautiful examples of academism in Serbia. Unfortunately, Old Court was place of one of the most hideous assassinations in Serbian history. In the night between 28 and 29 May 1903, conspirators savagely killed King Aleksandar and his wife Draga and threw them from the balcony on the second floor to the street. Today, Old court houses the Assembly of the City of Belgrade and the cabinet of the mayor. New Court was built between 1911 and 1912 by order of ruling family Karadjordjević and it was the official residence of King Aleksandar Karadjordjević. For a certain period, palace served as Museum of Prince Pavle and from 1948, it became official "house" of Assembly of Serbia. Currently, president of Serbia uses New Court as his official office.

SLAVIJA ROUNDABOUT

Slavija is the fastest, busiest and the craziest roundabout and intersection in Belgrade. Rumor has it that a group of Japanese tourists spent half a day just looking on it and trying to figure out how there are no accidents in such a busy roundabout. On a place of today's so-called square used to be a large swamp in which Belgradians hunted wild ducks. Settlement of Slavija was organized after Scottish businessman Francis Mackenzie bought a piece of land, parceled it out and sold to other people. During decades, it has developed into big roundabout in which seven streets and boulevards intersect. In 1988, the first McDonald's in Eastern Europe was open in Slavija Square.

ST. SAVA TEMPLE

Saint Sava Temple, the largest Orthodox temple in the Balkans was built in the Serb-Byzantine style and including the cross on top of the dome, it is 79 meters high. Construction began in 1935, but due to various challenges, including wars and political changes, it was completed in 2004. Church can seat more than 7,000 people at the same time. Saint Sava Temple is known for its polyphonic bells so make sure to get to the Temple at a full hour to hear them. It is built on the place where Turks burned remains of Saint Sava. Saint Sava, born as Rastko Nemanjić, was son of Serbian ruler Stefan Nemanja and

founder of Hilandar Monastery on Athos Mountain. In 1219, he founded Serbian Orthodox Church by winning independence from Byzantium. He is considered Serbian educator, saint and patron of schools and education establishments. Although church is still under construction, you can visit it during the day and evening.

SECOND DAY

During second day in the city, we suggest you to take a walk along New Belgrade and Zemun promenade and visit Gardoš Hill. To get the full experience, take this tour on foot. Starting point is Branko's Bridge on the right bank of the Sava River.

BRANKO'S BRIDGE

Branko's Bridge is one of the most frequently used bridges in Belgrade since it connects Old and New Belgrade. It was built on the place of former King Aleksandar I Bridge, which was destroyed in the beginning of the WWII to prevent German army to enter Belgrade. Although its original name is Bridge of Brotherhood and Unity, Belgradians call it Branko's Bridge since the street named after Serbian poet Branko Radičević leads towards the bridge.

After crossing the bridge, get down to the New Belgrade promenade on the left bank of the Sava River.

NEW BELGRADE PROMENADE

Thanks to the Sava and Danube rivers and Park of Friendship that is stretching along the banks, New Belgrade promenade is one of the most beautiful in the city.

At the very beginning of the promenade stands Museum of Contemporary Art that is under reconstruction at the moment. Museum has several departments with more than 35,000 works of art. Opposite to the museum, overlooking the confluence and the Kalemegdan, there is a number of floating restaurants that offer meals of international or local, Serbian cuisine.

PARK OF FRIENDSHIP

Park of Friendship which borders the promenade was created in 1961 and it was dedicated to at that time newly organized Non-Aligned Movement. During Tito's rule, many presidents and official political leaders planted a tree as a sign of friendship. Among them were Indira Gandhi, Richard Nixon, Queen Elisabeth II and many others. Our country kept that tradition until today, and the members of Rolling Stones were the last one to plant a tree here. In the midst of this park stands monument called Eternal Fire that was dedicated to victims of NATO bombing, erected in 1999.

PALACE OF SERBIA

In its vicinity, you will see Palace of Serbia, formerly called Palace of Federation. This building was home of all past governments (including Yugoslavia and union of Serbia and Montenegro), and it remains the home of present Serbian government.

RIVER RESTAURANTS AND CAFES

New Belgrade bank of the Danube is very popular because of number of restaurants, cafes and nightclubs usually called "splavovi" or floats. This is the place where people mostly come during hot

summer nights. Floats are open until early morning hours and many people often "greet" dawn while parting.

TAKE A BREAK! Since you have been walking for almost two hours, take a break and have a drink or creeps in some of the cafes or restaurants along the bank.

ZEMUN PROMENADE

Somewhere around the point where lies the pontoon bridge that leads towards Great War Island and Lido, ends New Belgrade and starts Zemun promenade. Since there is a big rivalry between residents of New Belgrade and Zemun, they had to make one invisible border just to mark the territory. Today many don't understand this so people make up jokes all the time just to make fun of this ridiculous rivalry.

WAR ISLAND – LIDO

The Great and adjoining Little War Island have played an important role in defense and conquests of Belgrade. As authority over Zemun and Belgrade changed, so did happen with islands, too. At one point island was divided between the Turkish and Austro-Hungarian empires.

The Great War Island divides Danube flow into main and secondary flow. It is a preserve of numerous endangered bird species. On the side facing Zemun there is a public sandy beach often called Lido. During hot summer days, Lido is crowded with people who are trying to relax in cold Danube water. Island and Lido are reachable only by boat, except during summer when a pontoon bridge connects island with mainland.

ZEMUNSKI KEJ

Restaurants on Zemun promenade

At the end of Zemun promenade, you will find many good fish restaurants. One of the best is old restaurant Šaran with its famous fish soup. However if you go to any other restaurant, you won't make a mistake. Lunch or dinner in some of restaurants is simply something you must do.

GARDOŠ

Gardoš is the pride of Zemun. Its here where the history of Zemun begins. While climbing narrow cobblestone streets towards the top of the Gardoš hill, pay attention to old houses with little gardens. This cute colorfully painted family houses stand here for several decades and they can give you insight into a life as it used to be in parts of Serbia under Austro-Hungarian rule.

When you climb the top of a hill, you will get to the Millennium Tower or formerly known as Sibirjanin Janko Tower. Tower was built in 1896 on a place of former Zemun Castle to celebrate 1,000 years of Hungarian state. It was named after Hungarian hero Janos Hunyadi or in Serbian Sibirjanin Janko who is believed to have died on this place.

Today, ground floor of Millennium Tower serves as an art gallery. On the first floor, you will find observation deck and permanent exhibition dedicated to Serbian scientist Milutin Milanković who was the first to explain how climate changes affect the Earth.

Time to get back

With conquest of the Gardoš Hill, you can slowly come back to Old Belgrade. You can choose between the walking route you have just passed and public transportation (stop Retail store Beograd with buses 84, 704, 706, 707 heading towards Zeleni venac). However, we suggest you to stay in Zemun promenade and have a dinner in one of fish restaurants with the view over Danube. With this dinner, you can conclude your short stay in Belgrade and make plans to come back again and meet some other faces of Serbian capitol.