

# Through the Heart of the Balkans

Trip Code: SER

Version:



WALK & TREK



GUIDED GROUP



MODERATE



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Enjoy an off the beaten track two day trek through the Bjelasica Mountains
- Watch Serbia's majestic griffon vultures soaring above Uvac Canyon
- Hike the remote Bear Summit Circuit and follow an ancient caravan route
- Stay in alpine shepherds huts and walk to hidden glacier lakes
- A unique opportunity to combine trekking and fascinating Balkan culture

## AT A GLANCE

- 7 days walking
- Max altitude - 2145 metres
- Join at Dubrovnik

## ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

# Introduction

This superb walking holiday takes you on a unique journey as you hike along hidden trails through an undiscovered corner of the Balkans. Montenegro and Serbia's mountains are still very much off the beaten track, extremely dramatic and culturally diverse. Combining Montenegro's stunning mountain ranges of Komovi and its UNESCO National Park of Durmitor, you'll walk in an area of the Balkans that sees very few tourists. A superb two day trek takes you through the magnificent Bjelasica Mountains as you stay in nomadic shepherd huts perched on alpine pastures. From Montenegro you'll cross into neighbouring Serbia to walk in the beautiful canyon of Uvac. This amazing natural site is home to one of the largest breeding colonies of griffon vultures in Europe. A night spent in a monastery offers a wonderful insight into Serbian Orthodox life, before you cross the border once again to finish your journey in Montenegro. Here you'll hike the spectacular Bear Summit Circuit and walk to glacier lakes hidden in lush forests. The final night is spent in the walled town of Trebinje in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which offers a unique cultural end to this very special Balkans journey.

## Is this holiday for you?

The walking on this superb holiday starts with a wonderful warm up day in the Komovi Mountains before the two day trek into the Bjelasica Mountains and Biograd National Park. For the two day trek we stay in the heart of the mountains away from roads. You will not have access to your main item of luggage from breakfast on Day 3 until the arrival at the hotel on Day 4. Bedding is provided for the night at the shepherd huts and there are no shower facilities. So, all you need to carry are your lunches and a few personal items for two days. The majority of walking days are between 5 and 7 hours with one longer day of 8 hours. Daily ascents and descents are between 200 and 850 metres, on trails which vary from rugged and rocky to forest footpaths and easy, open meadows. This excellent holiday is suitable for active walkers with a good level of fitness who are looking for a unique week of adventure in a remote part of Europe.

# Itinerary

---

Version:

## Holiday Information

---

### What's Included

- A professional and qualified tour leader
- Single timed airport transfers on arrival & departure
- All accommodation as described
- Meals as described in the Meal Plan
- National Park entrance fees
- All land transport required by the itinerary

### What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Tips for local staff
- Some meals as described in the Meal Plan
- Tips
- Miscellaneous expenses - drinks and souvenirs etc.

## Joining Arrangements & Transfers

A single transfer from Dubrovnik Airport to the group hotel in Podgorica is provided at lunchtime of Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary. On the last day of the Land Only itinerary, there will be a single transfer back to Dubrovnik Airport from Trebenje in Bosnia. This is timed for the check in of the morning flight.

Anyone can join these airport transfers by prior arrangement.

If your flight schedules do not fit with these single timed airport transfers we can provide private transfers at an additional cost.

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

## Meal Plan

All breakfasts, 7 lunches and 4 dinners are included.

## Food & Water

Water from the taps may not be drinkable in all locations on this trip - please check with your guide. We recommend taking water purification tablets and a reusable bottle with a filter such as [Water-to-Go](#), which can both be used to help make safe other water sources. Please note that we do not encourage the purchase of single use plastic bottles.

The food of Montenegro and Serbia has been shaped by its geographical position. Turkish, Mediterranean, Hungarian and other European cooking styles are common throughout the country and typical dishes of all these cultures are available in most places in Montenegro. Soups, stews, and goulashes are common as are meatballs and both countries love food from the grill, especially the tasty cevapi (kebab) and grilled meat patty which go excellent with onion. There is always plenty of bread which is usually Italian style, often served with a tomato and olive salad and various cheeses.

## Accommodation

During this holiday the group will spend 5 nights in comfortable small hotels, 2 nights in basic alpine (shepherd hut) accommodation and 1 night in a Serbian Orthodox monastery. In Podgorica, Zabljak and Trebenje accommodation is on a twin sharing basis and all rooms are en- suite.

For the 1 night in the Mileseva Monastery, rooms are either twin or triple share and as expected in a monastery, simple in style. Although the rooms here are simpler than in a hotel or guesthouse, staying here is a wonderful cultural element of the holiday, and offers the chance to stay in a Serbian Orthodox monastery. Bathroom facilities in the monastery are simple, but toilets and hot water is available. For the two nights in the mountains we stay in rustic shepherd cabins and all bedding is provided to avoid any heavy back-packing. This gives the perfect opportunity to get right into the mountains. Rooms here are mixed-sex dormitory style and bathroom facilities are basic (toilets but no showers), but staying in such a pristine alpine environment more than makes up for the lack of hotel facilities.

If you are travelling by yourself, you will be paired up with another single client of the same sex for the 5 nights in the hotels. Single rooms for these 5 nights are available for a supplementary cost. If you are planning on extending your holiday additional nights at the group hotel are available on request.

## **Group Leader & Support Staff**

The group will be led by a professional and qualified tour leader and a driver.

## **Spending Money**

We estimate that 150 - 200 Euros should be sufficient to cover all personal expenses such as drinks, snacks, tips for the local staff and non-included meals. Cash can be withdrawn from ATMs in Dubrovnik, Podgorica and Zabljak.

## **Guidance on Tipping**

Tipping is the accepted way of saying thank you to your local staff. It is important to remember that tipping is voluntary and dependent on good service. Most people will want to tip their guide and drivers on the trip and we recommend you do this as a group rather than individually. The group should decide on a level of tipping that all are comfortable with. We recommend 30 - 35 euro for the leader and 10 Euro for the driver.

## **Baggage Allowance**

We ask you to restrict your luggage to a single trek bag and small daypack. There is no weight limit other than that imposed by your international carrier but you will find travelling easier with lighter luggage.

## **Group Size & Holiday Status**

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in the 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

# General Information

---

## Passport & Visas

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders. A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

**It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday.** Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the [UK Government website](#).

## Health & Vaccinations

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips. You will need to carry your own treatment for the allergy with you, as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' are not carried as standard by KE leaders and staff. You should inform your leader on arrival of your allergy, and let them know where you keep your adrenaline pen.

## Preparing for your Holiday

It makes a lot of sense to spend some time before coming on any active holiday getting some additional exercise. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience. Regular hill walking is the best preparation but if this is not possible, a regular exercise regime is good for developing cardiovascular fitness and stamina.

## Climate

Montenegro and Serbia's climate in the mountains is typically alpine. In June to September the range is from 8 - 20°C rising to a daytime maximum of 24°C in August. Both countries are relatively dry, however showers, cloud and cool temperatures can occur in the mountains at any time of the year. During the summer months, as with most European mountain ranges it is not unusual to experience thunder storms in the afternoon. It is therefore best to come prepared for a variety of weather.

## Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that before travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at [travelaware.campaign.gov.uk](http://travelaware.campaign.gov.uk) and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates directly from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

## Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

## Books

- Western Balkans. (Lonely Planet)
  
- Montenegro. (Lonely Planet)
  
- Montenegro. (Rough Guides)
  
- The Mountains of Montenegro - A Walkers and Trekkers Guide. Rudolf Abraham. (Cicerone)

## Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

# Equipment Information

---

## Equipment List

The following checklist should help you with your packing. As a general rule, you should always try to keep the weight of your equipment to a minimum.

### You should bring the following items:

- Hiking boots
- Socks
- Trekking trousers
- Lightweight waterproof overtrousers
- Underwear
- Baselayer shirts
- T-shirts and/or casual shirts
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Waterproof jacket
- Gloves or mittens
- Sunhat
- Sunglasses
- Warm Hat
- Daypack 25-30 litres
- Headtorch and spare batteries
- Sun protection (including for lips)



- Water bottles x2
- Washbag and toiletries
- Small Towel
- Antibacterial hand wash
- Basic First Aid Kit including headache tablets, medicine for upset stomach (e.g. Imodium or Pepto Bismol), plasters and blister treatment.
- Small padlock (to lock your main bag)

**The following items are optional:**

- Trekking poles (recommended)
- Trainers
- Shorts
- Binoculars
- Insect repellent
- Camera
- Travel clothes
- Pen-knife (note: always pack sharp objects in hold baggage)
- Repair kit - (eg. needle, thread, duct tape)

## **Cotswold Outdoor**

Many of the equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive a 12.5% discount with Cotswold Outdoor, Snow+Rock and Runners Need. The discount code can be downloaded from

your MyKE account and you can use this code at the checkout, either in store or online.

## Land Only Information

We sell this holiday on a Land Only basis. It starts and ends at Dubrovnik Airport. Please refer to the 'Joining arrangements and transfers' within Holiday Information for further details.

Transport SHOULD NOT be booked until you have received your booking confirmation and the departure is showing 'Guaranteed to Run' or 'Limited'.

If flying from the UK there are a number of low cost airlines offering flights to Dubrovnik. A flight search website such as Skyscanner or Kayak may be useful to research your options.

If you would prefer to book a 'flight inclusive package' using scheduled airlines from the UK please contact our flights department for a quote. Whilst flight prices are likely to be more expensive you will benefit from full financial protection.

# Why Choose KE

## Why KE

This new trekking holiday combines the two fascinating Balkan countries of Montenegro and Serbia. We've included everything you'd expect from KE - excellent off the beaten track walking trails, a trekking route through the mountains and unique accommodation including a monastery overnight. At KE we work hard to respect and understand local cultures and wildlife conservation, so you'll sleep in local shepherd huts and walk to see Serbia's wild Griffon Vultures.

**Please Note** This document was downloaded on 21/12/2024 and the trip is subject to change