

Serbia СРБИЈА

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Belgrade** Tap into the capital's infectious partying energy (p980)
- **Novi Sad** Wander the mighty Petrovaradin Citadel, home of *the* European music festival EXIT (p982)
- **Subotica** Admire this town's amazing Art Nouveau architecture (p982)

FAST FACTS

- **Area** 88,361 sq km (about a quarter of the size of Germany)
- **ATMs** widespread
- **Budget** €50 per day
- **Capital** Belgrade
- **Country code** ☎ 381, international access code ☎ 99
- **Famous for** basketball
- **Head of State** Boris Tadic
- **Language** Serbian
- **Money** dinar (din); A\$1 = 53din; €1 = 88din; ¥100 = 62din; NZ\$1 = 43din; UK£1 = 129din; US\$1 = 68din
- **Phrases** *zdravo* (hello), *do viđenja* (good-bye), *hvala* (thanks)
- **Population** 7.5 million excluding Kosovo (estimate 2.4 million)
- **Time** GMT/UTC + 1
- **Visas** Not required for up to 90 days for EU, British, Australian, New Zealand, Canadian and US citizens



TRAVEL HINTS

Feed on burek, pizza, sandwich rolls and *čevapčići* (spiced kebabs). Stay in hostels. May to September is the best time to go.

ROAMING SERBIA

Bus or fly into Belgrade, then visit Subotica and Novi Sad (maybe on day trips).

With several years of stability since the demise of bad-man Slobodan Milošević, Serbia should now be part of any traveller's Eastern European plans.

Gritty, energetic Belgrade is a city of legendary partying, fine restaurants and good museums. In addition, Belgrade now has backpacker hostel, which makes life so much easier and cheaper.

Novi Sad and its mighty citadel hosts EXIT, one of the best music festivals in Europe with rock, blues, Latino, heavy metal, roots, hip-hop and techno acts to name just a few.

At other times Serbia is a laid-back artsy place. Subotica, a day trip from Belgrade or a stopover on the way to Hungary has amazing architecture dotted around a quiet town while a few kilometres away is the energetic lakeside resort of Palić.



HISTORY

The original Illyrian inhabitants were augmented by Celts and then Slavs in the 6th century AD. The assignment of Serbia to the Byzantine Empire when the Roman Empire was split in AD 395, and conversion of the population to orthodoxy in 879, wedded Serbia to Eastern Europe.

The Ottoman Turks invaded and defeated Serbia at the pivotal Battle of Kosovo in 1389 commencing 500 years of Turkish rule. Not until 1815 did Serbia achieve independence.

After WWI Serbia joined Croatia, Slovenia, Vojvodina and Macedonia to form Yugoslavia. During WWII Yugoslavia was invaded and partitioned between Germany, Italy,

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

- Ambulance ☎ 94
- Fire ☎ 93
- Motor vehicle assistance ☎ 987, road conditions ☎ 9800
- Police ☎ 92

Hungary and Bulgaria. Tito, a communist partisan leader, led a successful resistance movement and became leader of the federal republic of Yugoslavia in 1945. Serbia became a republic but its provinces, Kosovo and Vojvodina, were denied republic status.

In 1986, communist leader Milošević espoused an image of a 'Greater Serbia' that horrified Slovenia and Croatia. Through bloody war, the federation collapsed. In 1992 Serbia and Montenegro formed a third Yugoslav federation that provided no autonomy for Kosovo Albanians, who had long been repressed. Violence erupted in Kosovo in 1998.

In March 1999 Serbia began 'cleansing' Kosovo of its Albanians. Hundreds of thousands of Albanian refugees fleeing into Macedonia and Albania finally galvanised NATO into action. Bombarded by air strikes, Serbian forces withdrew and Kosovo became a UN/Nato protectorate.

In September 2001 Milošević was defeated in federal presidential elections and when he refused to accede a popular uprising forced him from office. Yugoslavia restored ties with Europe and rejoined the UN. In 2001 Milošević was arrested and extradited to the international war crimes tribunal in The Hague, where he died in March 2006.

In April 2002 the Yugoslav federation was replaced by the loose union of Serbia and Montenegro, and in May 2006 Montenegrins voted for independence breaking up the last vestige of Yugoslavia.

THE CULTURE

Serbia's 2002 census (excluding Kosovo) revealed an ethnic split of: Serbs 83%, Hungarians 4%, Bosniaks 2%, Roma 1.5%, Albanians 1%, Montenegrins 1%, and others 7.5%. There are large Slavic Muslim and Albanian minorities in southern Serbia and about 10,000 Muslims live in Belgrade. In Kosovo the minority Serbs (7%) live in Kosovo Force (KFOR) protected ghettos.

Serbs are strongly patriotic and have often felt that the world is against them. The south is very much traditional in its views whereas Belgrade and Vojvodina is more outward looking, especially to Europe. Regardless they are very welcoming and friendly towards visitors.

SPORT

Serbia is a regular European and world champion in basketball, volleyball and water polo. The Serbia and Montenegro football team qualified for the 2006 World Cup, but failed to pass the first round.

RELIGION

Religion and ethnicity broadly go together: 65% are Orthodox; 4% are Catholic Vojvodinan Hungarians; and 19% (including Kosovars) are Muslim.

ENVIRONMENT

In the north, Vojvodina is pancake-flat agricultural land. South of the Danube rolling green hills gradually rise to meet the Dinaric Alps that slice southeastwards across the country. Within these mountains is Kosovo, a lowland vale. The highest mountain is Djerdavica (2656m) in western Kosovo and the mountain ranges of Zlatibor and Kopaonik are the country's major ski resorts.

Wild animals inhabiting the mountains include the lynx, wolf and brown bear but they avoid humans so visitors are unlikely to come across them. The major national parks are Fruška Gora and Kopaonik, and Unesco-recognised sites are Sopoćani and Studenica monasteries.

Sewage pollution of river waters, air pollution around Belgrade and emissions from decaying industrial plants are the environmental issues the country has to face.

READING UP

Highly recommended is *Guerrilla Radio or Serbia Calling* by Matthew Collin, a compelling account of B92 radio's resistance to the Milošević regime. *Balkan Babel* by Sabrina Ramet, is an engaging look at Yugoslavia from Tito to Milošević. *With Their Backs to the World* by Lsne Seierstad is a compelling read of a cross section of Serbian lives during and after the Milošević years.

TRANSPORT

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Air

The national carrier JAT has regional European services out of Belgrade. International carriers like Aeroflot, Austrian Airlines, British Airways and Lufthansa fly to Belgrade's Nikola Tesla airport; its website (www.airport-belgrade.co.yu) gives details.

Currently there aren't any no-frills airlines flying into Serbia. Zagreb or Dubrovnik in Croatia are the closest airports servicing these airlines.

Bus

There's a well-developed coach service to France, Germany, Sweden and Turkey.

Car & Motorcycle

You'll need an International Driving permit and a Green Card for your vehicle. For details contact **Auto-Moto Savez Serbia and Montenegro** (Serbia & Montenegro Automotive Association; ☎ 9800; www.amsj.co.yu; Ruzveltova 18, Belgrade).

Train

Belgrade is an important hub for international trains. A **Balkans Flexipass** (www.raileurope.com) and student cards provide cheaper train travel. Daily services from Belgrade go to Bar in coastal Montenegro (1280din plus three-/six-berth couchette 890/445din, 11½ hours), Budapest (ticket/couchette €16/16, seven hours), Istanbul (ticket/couchette €45/10, 26 hours), Sofia (ticket/couchette €12/8, 11 hours) and Zagreb (ticket/sleeper €20/15, seven hours).

GETTING AROUND

Bus

The bus service in Serbia is reliable even if some buses verge on the decrepit. Luggage stowed below the bus costs 50din/€0.50 per piece; on longer journeys there are regular stops at cafés for refreshments and puff time for smokers.

Car & Motorcycle

VIP, **Hertz**, **Europcar** and **Net Rent a Car** have offices at Belgrade's airport with small cars from €45 a day. **Master Rent a Car** (☎ 245 0842; www.mastercar.co.yu) rents out a basic Yugo car from €25 a day.

Train

Jugoslovenske Železnice (JŽ; www.yurail.co.yu, in Serbian) provides adequate train services from Belgrade to Novi Sad and Subotica.

BELGRADE БЕОГРАД

☎ 011/pop 1.58 million

Hedonism, passion and shopping could easily sum up Belgrade. Does anyone work here, you wonder as you roam streets full of people? Every day seems a Saturday and every night a Friday with something always happening. Belgrade's ultimate appeal is its nightlife. There's always another party place: underground clubs, apartment bars or floating bars and clubs on the rivers.

Cheap food and drink plus a distinctive national cuisine make for decent restaurants bursting with lively eaters. Just check out the bohemian quarter of Skadarska. And when it all gets too much, there are places to escape to and relax. Ada Ciganlija swarms with swimmers during hot summer days and the nearby park has forests to walk in.

ORIENTATION

The train and bus stations are on Savski Trg on the city's south. A few blocks northeast, wide Terazije leads up to the square, Trg Republike, the heart of Belgrade.

From there Knez Mihailova, a pedestrian boulevard of restaurants, bookshops, galleries and shops with pretty things, runs northwest to where the Kalemegdan Citadel lords over the junction of the Sava and Danube Rivers.

INFORMATION

Bookshops

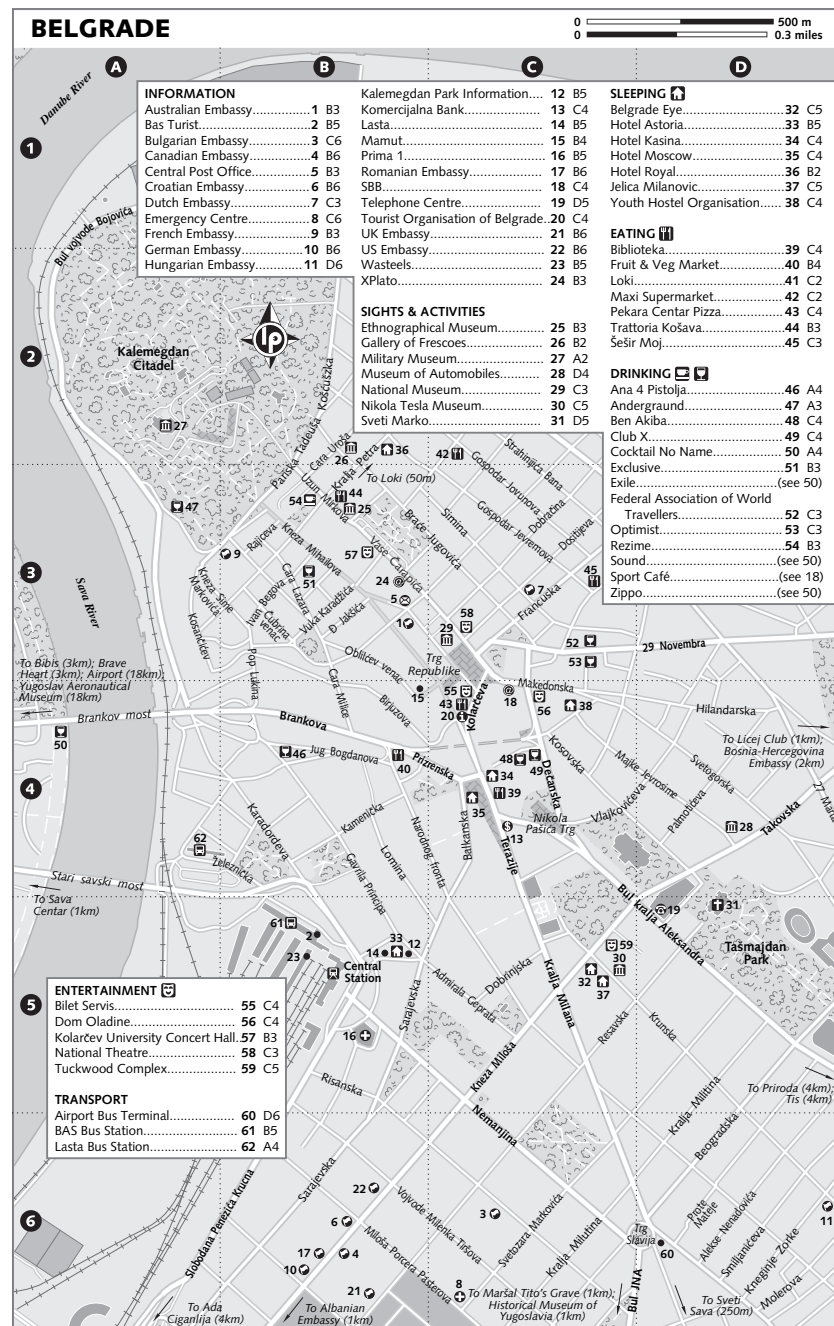
Mamut (☎ 639 060; cnr Knez Mihailova & Sremska; ☎ 9am-10pm Mon-Sat, noon-10pm Sun) Browser's heaven; books in English, CDs, DVDs, gifts and top-floor café.

Internet Access

SBB (off Makedonska 4; per hr 80din; ☎ 9am-midnight Mon-Sat, 11am-midnight Sun)
XPlato (Vase Čarapića 19; per hr 100din; ☎ 9am-11.30pm)

Internet Resources

Belgrade City site (www.beograd.org.yu)
Tourist Organisation of Belgrade (www.belgrade-tourism.org.yu)



Medical Services

Emergency Centre (☎ 361 8444; Miloša Pocerca Pasterova 2; ☎ 24hr) Medical clinics.

Prima 1 (☎ 361 0999; Nemanjina 2; ☎ 24hr) Pharmacy opposite train station.

Money

Komercijalna Bank (☎ 323 5087; Trg Nikole Pašića 2; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Sat, 9am-3pm Sun) Busy bank with useful Sunday opening; location is Terazije rather than Nikole Pašića.

Post

Central post office (☎ 363 3492; Zmaj Jovina 17; ☎ 8am-7pm Mon-Sat)

Telephone

Telephone centre (☎ 323 4484; Takovska 2; ☎ 7am-midnight Mon-Fri, 7am-10pm Sat & Sun)

Tourist Information

Yellow Cab is an events magazine (some English) available at kiosks (90din).

Tourist Organisation of Belgrade (☎ 324 8404; www.belgradetourism.org.yu; Terazije Underpass; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat, 10am-4pm Sun) Friendly and knowledgeable outfit with brochures and maps.

Travel Agencies

Bas Turist (☎ 263 6299; fax 784 859; BAS bus station) International buses.

KSR Beograd Tours (☎ 264 1258; fax 687 447; Milovana Milovanovića 5; ☎ 8am-7pm Mon-Fri, 8am-3pm Sat) Train tickets at station prices without the crowds.

Lasta (☎ 2641 251; www.lasta.co.yu; Milovana Milovanovića 1; ☎ 7am-9pm) International buses.

Wasteels (☎ 265 8868; wasteels@Eunet.yu; central train station; ☎ 9am-4pm Mon-Sat) Multilingual staff sell international train tickets, Eurail and Balkan flexipasses at station prices.

SIGHTS

Hop on **tram No 2** on its circular route around the city centre to get a quick introduction to Belgrade life.

Kalemegdan Citadel, built with big knuckles of stone, has been fortified since Celtic times. Much dates from the 17th century, but there are medieval gates, Muslim tombs and Turkish baths within. The tourist office has a guided map on what to see.

Nearby, the large **Military Museum** (☎ 334 4408; Kalemegdan Citadel; admission 100din; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun) parades a complete military history of Serbia. Proudly displayed are bits of an American

stealth fighter shot down in 1999 and captured Kosovo Liberation Army weapons.

The 3rd-floor gallery of the **National Museum** (☎ 330 6000; Trg Republike; admission 200din, free Sun; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue, Wed & Fri, noon-8pm Thu & Sat, 10am-2pm Sun) displays part of an enormous national collection of European art, including works by Picasso and Monet.

The **Ethnographical Museum** (☎ 328 1888; Studentski Trg 13; admission 100din; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue, 10am-10pm Thu, 9am-5pm Sat 9am-1pm Sun) has a comprehensive collection of well-presented Serbian national costumes and folk art.

All visitors should peek into the **Gallery of Frescoes** (☎ 638 264; Cara Uroša 20; admission 50din; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun) to appreciate the artistic wealth cloistered in this country's monasteries. There are some originals but otherwise they're exact replicas, faithful to the last blotch and scratch.

The **Museum of Automobiles** (☎ 303 4265; Majke Jevrosime 30; admission 50din; ☎ 11am-7pm) is a private collection of vehicles in Belgrade's first garage. Choice for our garage would be the '57 Cadillac convertible, only 25,000km and one careful owner – President Tito.

One of Belgrade's more interesting museums is the **Nikola Tesla Museum** (☎ 433 886; www.tesla-museum.org; Krunska 51; admission 50din; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat & Sun) dedicated to the Serbian discover of alternating current. The big thrill is when the curator turns on an oscillator that lights up the (unconnected) fluorescent tube you're holding.

Behind the main post office is **Sveti Marko** (Bulevar Kralja Aleksandra 17), a solid Serbian Orthodox Church, held up by massive pillars, that contains the grave of the Emperor Dušan (1308–55).

Started in 1935 and interrupted by Hitler, communism and lack of cash, **Sveti Sava** (Svetog Save) is billed as the biggest Orthodox church in the world. It's built where the Turks reputedly burnt the relics of St Sava, the youngest

GETTING INTO TOWN

Nikola Tesla airport is 18km west of Belgrade. The **JAT bus** (☎ 675 583; 160din; ☎ 5am-9pm hourly airport–town, 7am-10pm hourly town–airport) connects the airport with Trg Slavija and the train station. Ignore the taxi sharks prowling in the airport; take a cab away from the airport entrance for about 600din.

BELGRADE FREEBIES

- Sunday folk dancing in the **Kalemegdan Park** (opposite)
- Sundays at **National Museum** (opposite)
- **Sveti Marko** church (opposite)
- Massive, almost completed **Sveti Sava** (opposite)
- **Tito's Grave** and small museum (below)
- Catch **Tram 2** by the Kalemegdan for a city centre circle ride (25din – well, almost free)

son of a 12th-century ruler, and founder of the independent Serbian Orthodox church.

Maršal Tito's grave (☎ 367 1485; Bulevar Mira; admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun) has a quirky museum of gifts (needlework, dubious-purpose smoking pipes and weapons) given by toadying comrades and fellow travelers. Check whether the adjacent **Historical Museum of Yugoslavia** (☎ 367 1485; admission free; ☎ exhibitions 9am-2pm Tue-Sun) is open for one of its occasional exhibitions. Catch trolleybus 40 or 41.

At the airport, the exceptional **Yugoslav Aeronautical Museum** (☎ 670 992; admission 300din; ☎ 9am-2pm Tue-Sun Nov-Apr, 9am-7pm Tue-Sun May-Oct) is a must for aircraft buffs. There are some rare planes inside and old MIG fighters parked behind the museum.

Ada Ciganlija, an island park in the Sava River, is Belgrade's summer retreat. Your options are swimming, renting a bicycle, boating or sipping cold beers.

TOURS

Contact the Tourist Organisation of Belgrade (opposite) for details of city and river tours and KSR Beograd (opposite) for the steam-hauled railway excursion to Sremski Karlovci.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

FEST film festival (www.fest.org.yu) February to March; an international film festival.

Beer festival (www.belgradebeerfest.com) August; a heady mix of rock music and beer.

BITEF international theatre festival (www.beograd.org.yu) September; avant-garde theatre and street performances.

BEMUS (www.bemus.co.yu) October; a classical music festival with top orchestras.

SLEEPING

The **Youth Hostel Organisation** (Ferijalni Savez Beograd; ☎ 324 8550; www.hostels.org.yu; 2nd fl, Makedonska 22; ☎ 9am-4pm Mon-Fri) has organised a deal for discounted accommodation at the **Hotel Astoria** (☎ 264 5422; Milovana Milovanovića 1a; s/d €22/29). They can also arrange holiday student accommodation at the **Jelica Milanovic** (☎ 323 1268; Krunska 8; per person €11, with shared bathroom €9; ☎ Jul & Aug).

our pick **Hotel Royal** (☎ 263 4222; Kralja Petra 56; www.hotelroyal.co.yu; s/d from €25/33.50; ☎) Very central and cheap, the Royal's often bursting full so book as soon as you think, 'Aah! Belgrade'. Sure it's worn and the breakfasts are iron rations, but it is a buzzy place. There's the added bonus of folk music downstairs most nights.

Belgrade Eye (☎ 334 6423; www.belgradeeye.com; Krunska 6b; dm/d/tr per person with shared bathroom €11.50/17.50/14; ☎) This place has a range of services including doubles and dorms with luggage lockers, a kitchen for DIY catering and a terrace for good-weather lazing or firing up the barbie. For longer stayers the owners have apartments for rent.

Tis (☎ /fax 380 6050; terranova@sbb.co.yu; Koste Abraševića 17; bed per person from €15; ☎) New dorms and doubles, some with TVs, and a common room with free internet. You can buy sandwiches, coffee, tea and beer and lounge in the secluded garden. Laundry costs 400din a load. Take Tram 2, 5 or 7.

Licej Club (☎ 339 2466; Venizelosova 31; www.licejkon.com; s/d with shared bathroom €20.50/31; ☎) At the time of research this hostel had yet to open; let us know what you think.

Also recommended is the **Hotel Kasina** (☎ 323 5574; Terazije 25; s/d from €27/40; ☎ ☎) with a good choice of rooms from cheap shoebox singles to plush apartments.

SPURGE

Hotel Moscow (☎ 268 6255; www.hotelmoskva.co.yu; Balkanska; s/d/tr from €57/122/152; ☎) A hotel with character as the 1906 Secessionist-period exterior suggests. Indira Gandhi and Orson Welles stayed here, unfortunately for the gossip mags not in the same room and not at the same time but imagine if they had! Rooms are a touch expensive but come with ambience, antique furniture and space.

EATING

Belgraders like to graze on the hop. Plenty of kiosks and cafés offer *burek* (a greasy pie made with cheese, meat, potato or mushrooms), *čevapčići* (spiced kebabs), sandwich rolls and inventive pizzas. Many kiosks around Trg Republike are open 24 hours and generally offer stomach-fillers for less than 100din.

Loki (Kralja Petra; dishes 100-200din; ☎ 24hr) A street stall that's a Belgrade institution providing ballast for drinkers cruising nearby Strahinića Bana. Its big fat juicy *pljeskavica* (a Serbian burger) is responsible for the long queue at 1am.

Pekara Centar Pizza (Kolarčeva 10; pizza 60din; ☎ 24hr) Bright and cheery interior with trays of freshly made pizzas that just beckon you in.

Biblioteka (Terazije 27; meals 240-300din) We've always felt that a library and a drinking den were a natural combination of pleasures. Biblioteka provides both. Books and magazines are racked up for reading while waiters flit around to answer your drink and food requests. Breakfasts are served until 1pm.

Trattoria Košava (☎ 627 344; Kralja Petra 6; dishes 400-600din; ☎ 9am-1am Mon-Fri, noon-1am Sat & Sun) This Mediterranean-style Italian restaurant has a 'cheer you up on a bad day' pastel décor. Options are the downstairs café for a blow-in pizza snack, coffee and a cherry strudel, or the restaurant upstairs for serious eating.

Priroda (☎ 411 890; Batutova 11; dishes 540-890din; ☎ 9am-9.30pm, food 12.30-9pm) Battling in the face of adversity, this is an excellent vegetarian restaurant in a land of carnivores. Rediscover delicate flavours of vegetables and pulses absent from traditional Serbian cuisine.

For self-caterers there's Belgrade's **fruit and veg market** (cnr Brankova Prizrenska & Narodnog Fronta; ☎ 6am-1pm) and many supermarkets

SPLURGE

Šešir Moj (My Hat; ☎ 322 8750; Skadarska 21; dishes 300-500din) An intimate restaurant of warmly lit rooms with walls covered in lovely paintings, it's like eating in a film set, especially when a Roma band swirls in playing hauntingly romantic music. The menu presents what the Serbs do best – meat. Try the *punjena belavešanica* (pork fillet stuffed with cream cheese) and finish off with Serbian coffee and some delicious *orasnica* (walnut cake).

like **Maxi supermarket** (cnr Strahinića Bana & Višnjičeva; ☎ 7.30am-8pm).

DRINKING & CLUBBING

Cafés

Belgrade has some top-class café/bars that also serve beer, wines and spirits. Nearly all open from early morning to midnight, with a later start on Sundays. Most don't offer food. When the weather perks up, winter's cold pavements blossom into café terraces that soak up the spring sunshine.

Rezime (☎ 3284 276; Kralja Petra 41) When you're hangover-hobbled, slink up here and collapse in the leather armchairs. Try to wrangle your body back to some normality with their buck-you-up coffee and chilled chocolate mousse.

Sport Café (☎ 324 3177; Makedonska 4) Punters come here for the 20-plus sports screens rather than for the coffee.

Bars & Clubs

CITY BARS & CLUBS

Clubs come and go, quickly – check *Yellow Cab* or ask a young Belgrader for the latest hot spot. Many have regular bands at weekends or import the best DJs Europe has to offer.

Exclusive (☎ 328 2288; Knez Mihailova 41-45; snacks 70din, ☎ 9am-2am Mon-Sat, noon-1am Sun) Belgrade's answer to a Munich beer hall, it's a basement beer joint with plenty of knees-up music, serious drinking and big snacks of sausages and chips.

Ben Akiba (☎ 323 7775; Nušićeva 8; ☎ 9am-very late) A bubbly atmosphere and oh! those cocktails – so smooth, so seductive and so moreish. You could easily leave here early in the morning brain- and wallet-drained. Slip round the back of the main building, go up to the first floor and knock.

Federal Association of World Travellers (☎ 324 2303; 29 Novembra 7; ☎ 1pm-midnight Mon-Fri, 3pm-late Sat & Sun) A wonderfully eclectic basement bar where you feel you've joined a surrealists' house party. Just open the big black gate, follow the lights and listen for the music.

Optimist (☎ 323 8303; 29 Novembra 22; ☎ 10am-late) A big boozing warehouse near the top of Skadarska.

Also cruise Strahinića Bana for bars.

RIVER BARS & CLUBS

Adjacent to Hotel Jugoslavija, a few kilometres west of the town centre, New Belgrade is a kilometre-long strip of some 20 barges.

Brave Heart (Hrabo Sre; ☎ 851 1480; ☎ 10pm-4am)

A place for young men to show off their trophy girlfriends and chill out to DJ music until midnight when the live music revs up.

Bibis (☎ 319 2150; ☎ 10am-2am) A quieter place that's a useful starter to a night out; sit over a drink and plan where to go later. It's popular in winter when other barges close.

The Sava River west bank has another strip of floating bars and discos that open for summer. Here you'll find **Cocktail No Name** playing pop and 1980s music, **Zippo** for Serbian folk music, **Exile** pounding out techno and nearby **Sound** playing house and disco.

Nightclubs

Ana 4 Pistoja (☎ 065 223 8474; Svetozara Radića 4; ☎ 10pm-4am Thu-Sun) Descend the spiralling path into the caverns beneath the streets where DJs spin anything from techno to trance to a heaving mixed-ages throng.

Anderground (☎ 625 681; Pariska 1a; ☎ noon-midnight Sun-Thu, noon-2am Fri & Sat) Anderground is a warren of sweaty caverns where big-name DJs play weekdays and live music rocks on Saturdays. The large TV on the outside terrace screens sports events.

Club X (☎ 064 434 5827; Nušićeva 27; ☎ 11pm-4am Wed-Sun) Another crusty basement joint that's Belgrade's only gay and lesbian club. Things throb here to DJ beats and Saturday is reputedly the best night.

ENTERTAINMENT

Cinemas

Tuckwood Cineplex (☎ 323 6517; Kneza Miloša 7; tickets 200-280din) Shows the latest releases in English or with English subtitles.

Live Music

Big acts like Sting, Deep Purple, Lou Reed and Simple Minds are now appearing in Belgrade.

Bilet Servis (☎ 628 342; www.bilet servis.co.yu; Trg Republike 5; ☎ 9am-8pm) sells tickets for concerts and theatre.

Sava Centar (☎ 213 9840; www.savacentar.com; Milentija Popovića 9, New Belgrade) and **Dom Omladine** (☎ 324 8202; Makedonska 22) host major concerts.

In winter, there's opera at the elegant **National Theatre** (☎ 620 946; Trg Republike; ☎ box office 10am-2pm Tue-Sun) and the Belgrade Philharmonia at the **Kolarčev University Concert Hall** (☎ 630 550; Studentski Trg 5; ☎ box office 10am-noon & 6-8pm).

There's often free Sunday entertainment in the Kalemegdan park where folk come to

dance the traditional way to pipe, accordion and drum.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Belgrade's bus stations are **BAS** (Bus; ☎ 636 299; Železnička 4) serving distance locations and **Lasta** (☎ 625 740; Železnička bb) for local destinations. Sample services are Budva, Montenegro (1800din, 12 hours), Novi Pazar (800din, five hours) and Prishtina (1335din, seven hours).

The **train station** (☎ 629 400; Savski Trg 2) has a very helpful **information office** (☎ 361 8487; platform 1; ☎ 7am-7pm) and Wasteels (p978) sells rail passes and international tickets.

Frequent trains go to Novi Sad (from 185din, 1½ hours) and Subotica (from 400din, three hours).

GETTING AROUND

Bus, tram and trolleybus tickets cost 25din from street kiosks or 40din from the driver; make sure you validate your ticket in the machine on board. Tram 2 is useful for connecting Kalemegdan citadel with Trg Slavija, bus and train stations.

Taxis are plentiful; flag fall is 45din with 38din per km. Check that the meter's running, and avoid the taxi sharks around the stations.

VOJVODINA

ВОЈВОДИНА

Autonomous Vojvodina is more diverse than the rest of Serbia with more than 25 ethnic groups and six official languages. North of the Danube it is characterised by a flat fertile plain that provides much of the food that fills the nation's larders.

NOVI SAD НОВИ САД

☎ 021 / pop 299,000

Apart from the vastly popular EXIT Festival each July (see the boxed text, p982), Novi Sad is a quieter version of Belgrade with its own interesting cafés, bars, museums and pedestrian streets. The town can thank a large volcanic plug of rock on a Danube bend for its existence. On that feature a citadel was built, and around it the town grew. The first Mrs Einstein, a scientist in her own right, came from Novi Sad.

Orientation & Information

The adjacent train and intercity bus stations lie at the northern end of Bulevar Oslobođenja. It's a 2.5km walk to the city centre or a bus ride (bus 4) to the city bus station. One block south is Trg Slobode, the heart of Novi Sad, and Dunavska – a small cobbled street that's the entertainment hub of Novi Sad. A bridge leads over the Danube to the eastern bank and the old town.

KYM (Mituzuzic 4; per hr 60din) Internet.

Tourist Information Centre (☎ 421 811; Mihajla Pupina 9; www.novisadtourism.com; ☎ 8.30am–8pm Mon–Fri, 9am–1.30pm Sat) On-the-button office with plenty of info, especially on EXIT accommodation.

Sights

The comprehensive collection of the **Muzej Vojvodine** (☎ 420 566; Dunavska 35–37; admission 70din; ☎ 9am–7pm Tue–Fri, 9am–2pm Sat & Sun) is spread over two buildings. No 35 covers Vojvodina's history from Palaeolithic times to the late 19th century, and No 37 takes the story to 1945 with an emphasis on WWI and WWII.

Across the river stands the majestic **Petrovaradin Citadel** (admission free; ☎ 24hr), the 'Gibraltar of the Danube', designed by French architect Vauban and completed in 1780. Stairs beside the large church below lead to the fortress. Within the citadel are artists' studios and a **museum** (☎ 433 145; admission 200din; ☎ 9am–5pm) with an exhibition of city history.

Sleeping & Eating

Brankovo Kolo (☎ /fax 528 263; www.hostelns.com; Episkopa Visariona 3; d/tr/q per person with shared bathroom €12/13/14; ☎ 1 Jul–25 Aug; 📺) Student accommodation only available in summer.

Bela Lađa (☎ 661 6594; www.belaladja.com; Kisačka 21; s/d/tr per person with shared bathrooms €10) Several cosy rooms, above an old restaurant, providing homely comfort to 22 guests. Breakfast is available for €2.

Hotel Fontana (☎ 621 779; fax 621 779; Nikole Pašića 27; s/d 1500/2000din) Above a restaurant in the back streets behind the cathedral, the Fontana, with basic rooms, is a good cheap central find.

Gušan (Zmaj Jovina 4; dishes 110–400din) A basic eatery and beer bar downstairs from an alley off Zmaj Jovina. There's a decent set meal Monday to Friday.

Alla Lanterna (☎ 622 002; Dunavska 27; pizzas 400–550din) Come for the most unusual pebble-decorated interior and superior pizza. We

EXIT FESTIVAL

Using the fortifications of the Petrovaradin citadel as natural amphitheatres, organisers put up at least 19 stages to present the best in rock, blues, Latino, roots, heavy metal, hip-hop and techno by world-class acts. Festival-goers say it's the atmosphere here that makes it special, like several different festivals going on at the same time.

Performers in 2006 included Morrissey, Franz Ferdinand, The Cardigans and Pet Shop Boys plus DJs Steve Lawler, Junkie XL and local Marko Nastic. The website (www.exit-fest.org) has a ticket-booking service and reservations for the festival-village camping ground by a Danube beach.

particularly liked the spicy Madjorica with ham, cheese, hot sausage and chilli.

Red Cow (Dunavska 2; ☎ 8am–1am) More green than red, given the paint job. The Cow is a look-alike Irish pub with a warm, woody, beery atmosphere.

Getting There & Away

Frequent trains link the **train station** (☎ 443 200; Bulevar Jaše Tomića 4) with Belgrade (180din, two hours) and Subotica (240din, 1½ hours). Frequent buses leave the **bus station** (☎ 444 021; Bulevar Jaše Tomića 6) for Belgrade (250din, 1½ hours).

SUBOTICA СУБОТИЦА

☎ 024/pop 148,400

This is a useful transit point to Hungary (it's 10km from the border), with some gorgeous Art Nouveau architecture. The **train station** (☎ 555 606; Miličević) with a left-luggage office and bureau de change is an amble from the town centre.

The helpful folk at the **tourist office** (☎ 670 350; ticsu@yunord.net; Korzo 15; ☎ 8am–8pm Mon–Sat, 8am–noon Sun) have plenty of information and advice.

The imposing Art Nouveau town hall (1910) contains a worthwhile **historical museum** (☎ 555 128; admission 50din; ☎ 9am–4pm Tue, Wed & Fri, 11am–6pm Thu 10am–2pm Sat); check out the flogging trolley and mammoth skull.

The gorgeously decorated Art Nouveau **Modern Art Gallery** (☎ 553 725; Trg Lenina 5; ☎ 8am–2pm Mon, Wed & Fri, 8am–6pm Tue & Thu, 8am–noon Sat) is all swirling colourful lines employing ceramic tiles, mosaics and stained glass topped by a blue tile roof. If

you like this, check out the interior of the **Ravel café** (Nušićeva 2), near the Town Hall.

The resort of Palić, 8km away, edges onto a 5.5 sq km lake that provides boating (sail and row), windsurfing and swimming.

Dom Učenika Srednjih Skola (☎ 555 510; Harambašićeva 22; dm with shared bathroom per person 540din, s/d 1080/1728din) has student accommodation with rooms available throughout the year. Weekday accommodation is possible, but it's best to phone and check; they speak good English. Meals are available

Lipa (Đure Đakovica 13; burek 70din; ☎ 24hr) is a *burek* shop with the finest cheese-and-mushroom *burek* and yogurt: a hunger filler or hangover quietener.

A buzzing café with an artsy crowd, **YUFEST** (552 292; Trg Republike; internet per hr 100din) is in the ground floor of the former town hall that's fronted with massive columns. The train station has a decent café and a small supermarket in the basement for your chocolate needs.

From the **train station** (☎ 555 606), one international and two local trains go to Szeged, Hungary (155din, 1¼ hours). Trains to Belgrade (480din, 3½ hours) also stop at Novi Sad. The **bus station** (☎ 555 566; Markov Put) has regular services to Szeged (210din, 1½ hours) and hourly buses to Novi Sad (400din, two hours) and Belgrade (525din, 3½ hours).

SERBIA DIRECTORY

ACCOMMODATION

Backpacker accommodation is making an appearance in Belgrade and Novi Sad as more budget travellers visit Serbia.

ACTIVITIES

Serbia's main skiing resorts are Zlatibor and Kopaonik with a ski season from December to March.

BUSINESS HOURS

Banks usually open from 8am to 6pm on weekdays and 8am to noon on Saturday. On weekdays shops open from 8am to 5pm or later. On Saturday, government offices close and many shops close early.

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Travel is generally safe except in southeastern Serbia and Kosovo where travellers should exercise caution. Check with police before

taking photographs of any official building they're guarding.

Smokers flaunt non-smoking regulations and strike up anywhere, regardless of non-smokers.

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

All of the following are based in Belgrade:

Albania (☎ 306 6642; Bulevar Mira 25A)
Australia (☎ 330 3400; Ćika Ljubina 13)
Bosnia-Herzegovina (☎ 329 1277; Milana Tankosića 8)
Bulgaria (☎ 361 3980; Birčaninova 26)
Canada (☎ 306 3000; Kneza Miloša 75)
Croatia (☎ 361 0535; Kneza Miloša 62)
France (☎ 302 3500; Pariska 11)
Germany (☎ 306 4300; Kneza Miloša 74–6)
Hungary (☎ 244 0472; Krunska 72)
Netherlands (☎ 328 2332; Simina 29)
Romania (☎ 361 8327; Kneza Miloša 70)
UK (☎ 264 5055; Resavska 46)
USA (☎ 361 9344; Kneza Miloša 50)

Serbian Embassies & Consulates Abroad

Australia (☎ 02-6290 2630, yuembau@ozemail.com.au; 4 Bulwarra Close, O'Malley, Canberra, ACT 2606)
Canada (☎ 613-233 6289, www.embscg.ca; 17 Blackburn Ave, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 8A2)
France (☎ 01 40 72 24 24, ambasadaparis@wanadoo.fr; 54 rue Faisanderie, 75116 Paris)
UK (☎ 207-235 9049, www.yugoslavembassy.org.uk; 28 Belgrave Square, London, SW1X 8QB)
USA (☎ 202-332 0333, www.yuembusa.org; 2134 Kalaroma Rd NW, Washington DC, 20008)

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Apart from those mentioned in city sections, there's an annual festival of brass band music at Guča near Čačak in the last week of August.

FOOD & DRINK

A favourite cheap snack is *burek*, a greasy-pastry pie made with *sir* (cheese), *meso* (meat), *krompiruša* (potato) or occasionally *pecurke* (mushrooms); with yogurt it makes a good breakfast. *Āorba* (soup) or *ĉevapčići* (grilled kebab) can make a filling midday meal.

Serbia is famous for its grilled meats, such as *ĉevapčići*, *pljeskavica* (spicy hamburger), *ražnjići* (pork or veal kebabs) and *duveć* (grilled pork cutlets with spicy stewed peppers, courgettes and tomatoes on rice).

Regional cuisines range from spicy Hungarian goulash in Vojvodina to Turkish kebab in Kosovo. In southern Serbia try *kajmak* (a salted cream turned to cheese).

Pivo (beer) is universally available. Many people distil their own *rakija* (brandy) out of plums and other fruit and the red wine, *venac* especially, is a rich drop.

HOLIDAYS

Public holidays in Serbia include:

New Year 1 and 2 January

Orthodox Christmas 7 January

Constitution Day 15 February

International Labour Days 1 and 2 May

INTERNET RESOURCES

B92 (www.b92.net) A good independent source of Serbian news.

Serbian Government (www.srbija.sr.gov.yu)

Government information.

Serbian Tourist Organisation (www.serbia-tourism.org) Tourist information.

LANGUAGE

Serbian is the common language in Serbia but many people know some English and German. Hungarians in Vojvodina use the Latin alphabet; Serbs use both Latin and Cyrillic.

MONEY

Serbia uses the dinar, which is used for most transactions (although euro notes can be accepted). ATMs are widespread in major towns and Visa, MasterCard and Diners Club are widely accepted. Many banks cash travellers cheques. A currency declaration form is needed for more than €2000 when entering Serbia.

POST

Parcels should be taken unsealed to a main post office for inspection. You can receive poste restante mail in all towns for a small charge.

TELEPHONE

Phone cards don't give enough time for an international call, so use the telephone centre at post offices. Press the *i* button on public phones for dialling commands in English. Dial 99 for international access; the international operator is ☎ 901. Numbers starting with 06X are mobile numbers.

VISAS

Citizens of European countries, Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and USA don't need visas for stays of less than 90 days. The website of the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs** (www.mfa.gov.yu) has details.