

Montenegro

Expect newly independent Montenegro to come out from its Yugoslav shadow and be seen for the beauty it is. No longer should visitors think they'd fall off the edge of the world if they journey east beyond Dubrovnik.

Croatia's sapphire blue Adriatic Sea does continue. However here it's backed by a craggy, grey mountain range leaving just enough room for a ribbon of coastal towns on a sweep of sandy beaches and small coves running down to the Albanian border.

Historic walled towns like Stari Bar, Budva, Kotor and Herceg Novi are perfect for exploring, and anywhere along the coast you can find private rooms in a laze-away seaside town.

The interior is a setting of dramatic mountains tufted with pine forests, dotted with lakes and scored by giddy-deep canyons. The highest region, the Durmitor National Park, is a favourite for winter skiing and summer hiking in a pristine mountainscape while below in Tara's deep canyon, intrepid rafters challenge its tumbling rapids. So much for a small country – the world's newest nation.

FAST FACTS

- **Area** 13,812 sq km
- **Capital** Podgorica
- **Currency** euro (€); US\$1 = €0.77;
UK£1 = €1.47; A\$1 = €0.60; ¥100 = €0.70;
NZ\$1 = €0.49
- **Famous for** being the newest country in the world
- **Official Language** Serbian
- **Phrases** *zdravo* (hello); *hvala* (thanks);
da (yes); *ne* (no); *govorite li engleski?* (do you speak English?)
- **Population** 716,000 (2005 est)
- **Telephone codes** ☎ 381, international access code ☎ 99



MONTENEGRO GOES IT ALONE

There comes a time in any unhappy marriage when one partner decides to leave home. Especially in a union called Serbia and Montenegro – essentially a shotgun marriage arranged by a potential parent-in-law, the EU. Montenegro has narrowly voted for independence and packed its bags, but it'll be a gradual separation as common assets are divvied up. There'll be embassies to establish and talks to have with the EU over membership. The brake on Serbian entry, and the handing over of war criminals, won't apply to Montenegro, which suddenly loses any taint by being associated with Serbia.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Gazing down on the broody Wagnerian fjord from the castle ruins above **Kotor's old town** (p559).
- Skiing, hiking, climbing or rafting the white-water rapids in **Durmitor National Park** (p562).
- Lazing, slurping on ice creams, and building elaborate sandcastles on just about any beach in the country. Give **Budva** (p558) a go.
- Wander around the former capital of **Cetinje**, (p561) and discover the old embassies that might one day be needed again.

ITINERARIES

- **One week** Bum your way through the coastal towns. Definitely idle away some days in Kotor, soak up Budva's sun and build a sandcastle on one of Ulcinj's beaches.
- **Two to three weeks** Add in the interior with hiking and rafting in Durmitor, roaming around Cetinje and exploring Lake Skadar.

HOW MUCH?

- **Short taxi ride** €2
- **Internet access per hour** €1
- **Coffee** €1
- **Bottle of plum brandy** €8

LONELY PLANET INDEX

- **Litre of petrol** €1.05
- **Litre of bottled water** €1
- **Beer** €1
- **Souvenir T-shirt** €10
- **Street snack (slice of pizza)** €0.60

CLIMATE & WHEN TO GO

Montenegro's coastline has a Mediterranean climate featuring short cool winters and long dry summers. Inland, the winters are somewhat longer and colder, and the summers shorter and hotter, while the mountain regions experience cold snowy winters and warm summers.

The Montenegrin coast is best experienced during May, June and September, however, try to avoid July and August, when accommodation can become quite scarce and expensive. Montenegro's ski season runs from December through March. And just to let you know – the summer sea temperature is 25°C to 28°C.

HISTORY

Montenegro's history is one of dogged independence pitched in battle against greater forces, which have crashed in failure against its rocky fortress interior. For 500 years Montenegro laid claim to being the only country able to defeat the Turkish forces that overran southeast Europe, and remain independent. While the extent of the country's territory waxed and waned over the centuries, it was always centred on the central mountain fastness of Cetinje.

Only twice in Montenegro's history has the country not been the master of its own affairs: the first instance occurred from 1166, and lasted for about 200 years, when it was taken over by the Serbian kingdom of Raska. The second instance occurred in 1916 during World War I when the Austrians invaded. On the back of this last event Montenegro's ally Serbia seized the opportunity to occupy Montenegro and then proceeded to annex it in 1922.

Montenegro's development from tribal society to a modern state started with the *vladike*, the prince-bishops who ruled from the end of the 17th century; these *vladike* were

supposedly celibate so the line of succession went from uncle to nephew.

During Vladika Petar I's rule and that of his successor, Petar II Petrovic Njegos, Montenegro was moulded into a state with the establishment of a central government supported by a taxation system.

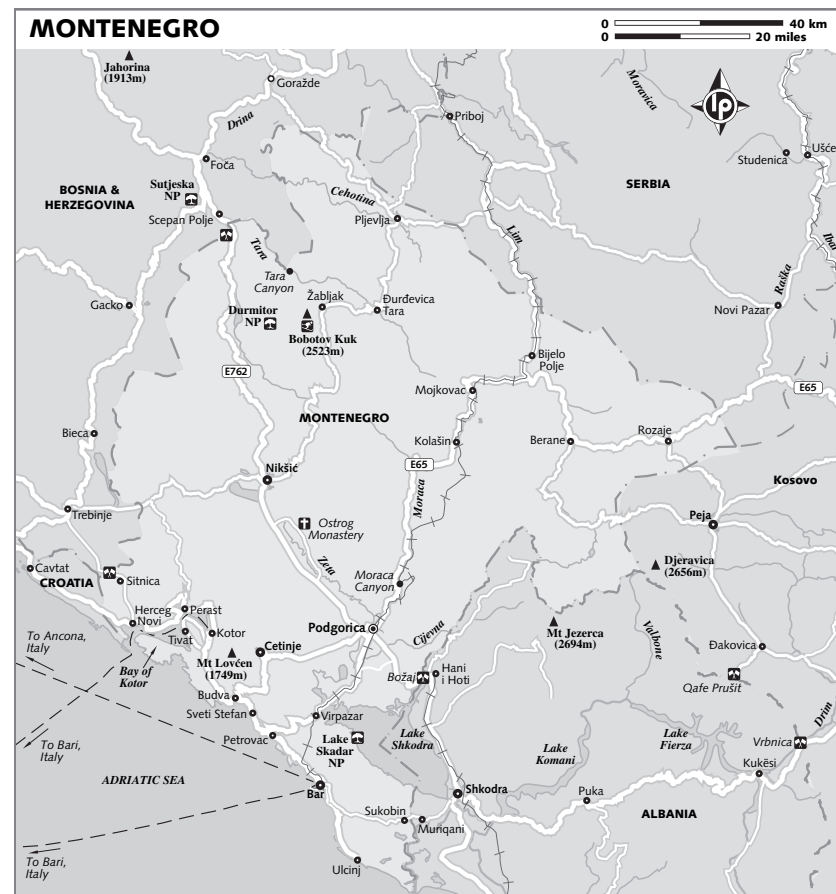
Under Petar II's successors, Montenegro finally secured its territories with the defeat of the Turks in the Russo-Turkish war and recognition at the subsequent Congress of Berlin in 1878.

By the turn of the 19th century, Montenegro was developing into a modern state with a legal framework, education system, a telegraph and postal service and the development of roads and railways. Cetinje was also becoming a

social capital of southeastern Europe. Nikola I Petrovic, Montenegro's ruler, married six of his daughters into European royal and aristocratic families, and several embassies and diplomatic missions were established in Cetinje. Their fine buildings can still be seen today.

In 1910, Montenegro became a constitutional monarchy with Nikola as king, but within four years the country was at war and eight years later a Serbian satrapy. A popular revolt, the Christmas Uprising, erupted in 1919 and rumbled on until the exiled King Nikola withdrew his support. This period is marked by a large Montenegrin diaspora, mainly to the USA.

As a reward for its stalwart support of the partisans during WWII, Tito gave Montenegro republic status in the postwar Yugoslav



federation. From then on Montenegro was a loyal member of all of Yugoslavia's incarnations culminating in the loose union of Serbia and Montenegro that came to an end with the pro-independence vote in May 2006.

Montenegro is now fully independent for the first time since 1916, and became the 192nd member of the UN on 28 June 2006.

PEOPLE

Montenegro's 2003 census revealed a population of 673,000. The ethnic split is made up of 43% Montenegrins, 32% Serbs, 8% Bosnians, 5% Albanians and 12% other groups. There are large Slavic Muslim and Albanian minorities.

RELIGION

Religion and ethnicity broadly go together with Montenegrins and Serbs following Orthodoxy and Albanians Islam.

ARTS

Music

A Palaeolithic whistle shows that musically Montenegro made an early start. A later, and preserved, liturgical chant reveals that religious music was well established in medieval times but the earliest record of secular musical instruments is in the 12th century when they were used in military tactics to create an illusion of greater numbers.

Traditional instruments are the one-stringed *gusle* and the flute, which are used to accompany poetic verse. In contemporary music, names to watch out for include Borislav Taminjzic, whose expressive work is based on folk music, Zarko Mirkovic, who uses electro-acoustical media, and Senad Gacevic, who makes contemporary fusion.

Montenegrin pop is alive and well. The boy band No Name came seventh in the 2005 Eurovision Song contest but was booted off a Belgrade stage in a contest to decide the joint 2006 entry.

Two big music festivals, Budva's Festival of Mediterranean Song and Herceg Novi's Sunčane skale festival, showcase modern Montenegrin popular music and all its derivatives.

Literature

An early printing press introduced the printed word to the southern Slavs in 1493 and one of these, a religious tract, is preserved in Cetinje Monastery. Montenegrin literature has its

roots in folk poetry sung to the accompaniment of the *gusle*. The country's most famous poet was its Prince-Pishop Peter II, whose epic poem *Mountain Wreath* is a synthesis of Montenegrin and Serbian philosophy.

Art

Montenegro's monasteries are the repositories of early art with some frescoes going back to the 10th century. Most of these and icons were executed in the traditional Byzantine style.

In subsequent centuries, Montenegrin artists were influenced by the Italian renaissance and the baroque, and by the 20th-century artists were adopting European styles, notably postimpressionism and expressionism. In the late 20th century a new generation of artists extended international styles by blending in Montenegrin imagery with political and social concerns.

ENVIRONMENT

The country is characterised by a narrow coastal strip backed by a high alpine hinterland and an interior karst plain with craggy grey-white outcrops, sparse vegetation and caves. Bobotov Kuk (2523m) in the Durmitor Range is the highest mountain.

A variety of wild animals inhabit the mountains including deer, lynx, wolf and brown bear while Lake Skadar is the biggest bird sanctuary in Europe and one of the last remaining pelican habitats. Twenty-five percent of Europe's flora can be found in this small republic as well as one of Europe's two rainforests.

Durmitor, Mt Lovcen and Lake Skadar are the major national parks, and Kotor and Durmitor are Unesco-recognised sites.

Sewage pollution of coastal waters, air pollution from Podgorica's aluminium plant and rubbish dumping in the countryside are the environmental issues the country has to face.

FOOD & DRINK

Montenegrin food is a mix of Eastern European with an emphasis on grilled meats and Mediterranean cuisine, with its traditional garlic and olive oil base. Fish, from Lake Skadar or the sea is plentiful. A continental speciality is *kajmak* (a salted cream turned to cheese) and Žabljak's variety is the best. Montenegrins have a thing about Italian food, and pizza and pasta is everywhere. Salads, *gibanica* (cheese pie), *zeljanica* (cheese and spinach pie) or *pasulj prebranac* (a cooked dish of spicy beans) are fall-back fare for vegetarians.

Nikšičko *pivo* (try saying that after a few) is the local beer and is a good thirst quencher. Many people distil their own *rakija* (brandy) out of plums and other fruit. Montenegrin red wine, *venac* especially, is a rich drop.

Coffee is usually served Turkish-style, 'black as hell, strong as death and sweet as love'. If you want anything other than herbal teas you should ask for Indian tea.

PODGORICA

ПОДГОРИЦА

☎ 081 / pop 179,500

The nation's capital has little to offer visitors, who usually pass through on their way to the mountains or the coast. Accommodation here is expensive compared to the coast, where a €40 room will fetch €250 in Podgorica.

ORIENTATION

The train station and bus station are in the eastern part of the town. The commercial hub centres on Slobode and intersecting with it is Hercegovačka, the shopping-café heart of the town.

INFORMATION

Atlas Bank (☎ 407 211; Stanka Dragojevića 4;

☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, to 12.30pm Sat) Cashes travellers cheques.

Internet cg (☎ 403 444; Vučedolska 13; per hr €1.50;

☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat)

Left luggage (bus station; per piece €1; ☎ 6am-10pm)

SLEEPING & EATING

There are some cheap eating places around the bus station and pleasant cafés in Hercegovačka.

In a city of overpriced hotels, modern and well-equipped **Europa** (☎ 623 444; Orahovačka 16; s/d €45/70; ♿ ♿ ♿), near the train station, is a weary traveller's best friend, if a night in Podgorica is a necessity. There's free internet in each room, a fitness centre to tone you up and a sauna to sweat you out.

Found in most big town bus stations in Montenegro, canteen-style restaurants like **Express Restoran** (bus station; meals €2-4) dish up good cheap meals. It's all on display, so you point and pay without stretching your knowledge of the language.

Buda Bar (☎ 344 944; Stanka Dragojevića 26; sandwiches €2.50) is a sleeky ultramodern café-bar so laid-back the meditative golden Buddha statue seems completely out of it. Equally reflective customers read their newspapers or stare into their espressos searching for the eternal truth. Come evening and the mood changes to a bustling chatty meeting place.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Air

Montenegro Airlines (☎ 664 411; www.montenegro-airlines.cg.yu; Slobode 21; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Fri, to 2pm Sat) flies to European destinations from Podgorica and to Belgrade from Tivat. The airport tax is €8/15 for domestic/international flights.

JAT (☎ 664 740; www.jat.com; Ivana Milutinovića 20; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat) flies several times a day from Podgorica and Tivat to Belgrade. Flights to Belgrade are €73.

Bus

Buses go from the **bus station** (☎ 620 430) to Belgrade (€20, nine hours, 11 buses), Žabljak (€8, four hours, at 1.10pm, 1.50pm and 3.30pm), Sarajevo (€14, nine hours, at 7.40am, 9.30am, 1.35pm and 11pm) and many to Rožaje, for Peja in Kosovo (€8, four hours).

Train

Services from the **train station** (☎ 633 663) travel the scenic train route to Belgrade (€15 plus €10/5 for a three-/six-berth sleeper on overnight trains, eight hours). There are frequent trains to Bar and Sutomore on the coast.

GETTING AROUND

Call **Bum** (☎ 9703) for a taxi to the airport (about €7). **Meridijan** (☎ 234 944, 069 316 666; Cetinjski put; ☎ 8am-2pm & 6-8pm Mon-Fri, 8am-2pm Sat) rents cars from €30 a day.

AROUND PODGORICA

Virpazar & Lake Skadar

ВИРПАЗАР & СКАДАРСКО ЈЕЗЕРО

A causeway carries both road and rail traffic from Podgorica to Bar, passing over the western edge of the 44km-long Lake Skadar. This beautiful lake, fringed by mountains, is the biggest lake in the Balkans, and is one of the largest bird sanctuaries and remaining pelican habitats in Europe. Jutting westward from the causeway is the 400-year-old Turkish castle of Lesendro. Ask around Virpazar for boat trips.

The **Pelikan** (☎ 081-711 011; Virpazar; dishes €6-8) restaurant is renown for its cuisine and décor. The dining room is exotically decorated with dried plants, old photographs, nautical ephemera and a series of well-battered hats. Try any of the fish dishes, all made with fish fresh from the lake. The service is top-notch and dessert is on the house. On weekend evenings, May to September, there's live music. The Pelikan also has accommodation (d with shared bathroom €20).

COASTAL MONTENEGRO

BAR BAR

☎ 085 / pop 45000

Backed by a precipitous coastal range, the modern city of Bar is Montenegro's major port and a transport hub for the coast. Far more interesting, however, is the 1000-year-old Stari Bar (Old Bar). Whether arriving from the north or by ferry from Italy, Bar will be most people's first stop in coastal Montenegro.

Orientation & Information

The ferry terminal in Bar is 300m from the town centre; the bus station and adjacent train station are about 2km southeast of the centre.

Cnogorska Komercijalna Bank (Obala Kralja Nikole bb) ATM; opposite ferry terminal.

Komercijalna Bank (☎ 311 827; Obala Kralja Nikole bb) Cashes travellers cheques.

Tourist Information Center (☎ 311 633; tobar@cg.yu; Obala 13 Jula bb; ☎ 8am-4pm Sep-Jun, 8am-8pm Jul & Aug) Helpful office with good information.

Sights

The impressive **Stari Bar** (admission €1; ☎ 9am-5pm Apr-Oct) stands on a bluff 4km northeast, off the Ulcinj road. A steep cobbled hill takes you up to a fortified entrance, from where a short dark passage pops you out into a huge garden of vine-clad walls, abandoned streets and ruins overgrown with grass and wild flowers.

The northern corner has an 11th-century fortress with views showing Stari Bar's isolated and beautiful setting amid mountains and olive groves. Also in the northern corner are the foundations of the church of St George, the patron saint of Bar. Originally a Romanesque church, the Turks rebuilt it into a mosque in the 17th century, but the unlucky spot was yet again

in ruins after an accidental explosion of gunpowder. Nearby are two preserved churches, **St Veneranda** and **St Catherine**, both from the 14th century. Around the corner is a Turkish bath from the 17th or 18th century – a solid, charming building. In the western part of the town are the remains of the **Church of St Nicolas**, with glimpses of Serbo-Byzantine frescoes.

Stand still and imagine the murmur of people and the scurrying of everyday life in this once-sophisticated city.

Nearby is the **Stara Maslina** (Old Olive Tree), which is reputedly 2000 years old. Ask for directions as there are many other gnarled and ancient trees around here.

Sleeping & Eating

Putnik Gold (☎ 311 605; putnikgold@cg.yu; Obala 13 Jula bb; s/d from €10/20, breakfast/full board €3/10, apt without meals from €40; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Sat Oct-May, 8am-8pm Mon-Sat Jun-Sep) Books accommodation along the coast.

Pulena Pizza Pub (☎ 312 816; Vladimira Rolovića bb; dishes €2.50-6) A busy eating and drinking place under the outer of the three spaceships that some architect thought was a good design for a market. Pizzas and pastas are on offer to be washed down with a beer or soft drink; otherwise the coffees are good. Beware, small pizzas are large.

GMG Supermarket (☎ 312 619; Vladimira Rolovića bb; ☎ 6am-11pm) Sells all you need for a feed-yourself holiday.

Getting There & Away

Barska Plovidba (☎ 312 336; mlinesagency@cg.yu; ferry terminal; ☎ 8am-10pm sailing days, 8am-8pm other days) books Montenegro Lines, which sails to Bari (at 10pm Tuesday, Thursday & Sunday) and Ancona (at 4pm Wednesday and Friday, July to mid-September) in Italy. For schedule and prices check www.montenegrolines.net.

Mecur (☎ 313 617; merco@cg.yu; Obala 13 Jula bb; ☎ 9am-3pm Mon-Sat Oct-May, to 8pm Mon-Sat Jun-Sep) books Azzurra Lines, which runs from Kotor to Bari on Mondays, June to September. For schedule and prices check www.azzurraline.com.

The **bus station** (☎ 346 141) has almost hourly services to the coastal towns and inland to Podgorica. Fares are between €1 and €3.

The **train station** (☎ 312 210) is on the Sutomore to Belgrade line with two daily services to Belgrade and frequent services to Podgorica or Sutomore.

ULCINJ УЛЦИЊ

☎ 085 / 26,500

The town of Ulcinj heads a series of fine beaches from Mala Plaža (Small Beach) below the old town to Velika Plaža (Great Beach), a famous 12km beach stretching eastwards towards Albania. The Stari Grad (Old Town) is a maze of private houses intermingled with expensive restaurants exploiting the view.

The Turks ruled here for over 300 years and Ulcinj gained notoriety as a North African pirate base and slave market between 1571 and 1878. Today there is a significant Muslim population and the town is popular with Kosovars. An invasion happens every July and August when tens of thousands of holidaymakers flock to enjoy its beaches and Mediterranean climate. Ulcinj is also a transit point for travellers wanting to go on to Albania.

Orientation & Information

The bus station is on the edge of town, off the Bar-Ada road. Travel into town by turning right onto 26 Novembar (Hafiz ali Ulquinaku) at the first major junction. Mala Plaža and Stari Grad are 3km below at the end of 26 Novembar. Velika Plaža begins about 5km southeast of the town.

Komercijalna Bank (☎ 421 995; 26 Novembar bb)

Cashes travellers cheques; Visa ATM.

SHPK Art Tours (☎ 401 437; 0609 031 525; 26

Novembar bb; per hr €0.50; ☎ 9am-midnight) internet and travel agency.

Sights & Activities

Rising up from the sea's edge, the ramparts of Stari Grad (Old Ulcinj) overlook both town and Mala Plaža, and while earthquakes shattered many buildings in 1979 they have been faithfully reconstructed. Climbing up from the beach and wandering through to the upper gate brings you to a small **museum** (☎ 421 419; Stari Grad; admission €1; ☎ 8am-2pm Mon-Fri) with Montenegrin and Turkish artefacts.

Divers wanting a chance to swim around various wrecks and the remains of a submerged town should contact the **D'olcinium Diving Club** (☎ 421 612; www.uldiving.com) for information.

Sleeping

Real Estate Tourist Agency (☎ 421 609; www.real-estate-travel.com; 26 Novembar bb; r from €7-20, B&B from €19, 2-/3-/4-bed per apt €20/30/40; ☎ 8am-9pm) This agency (200m above Mala Plaža) arranges accommodation in private rooms and

apartments that usually come with cooking facilities. It also runs local tours.

Bella Vista Travel Agency (☎ 402 088; bellavista@cg.yu; 26 Novembar bb; s/apt B&B from €12/25) The family restaurant opposite Real Estate has several rooms and apartments available. It also sells air and ferry tickets, and runs day excursions.

Dvori Balašića and the adjacent **Palata Venecija** (☎ /fax 421 457; leart@cg.yu; Stari Grad; 2-/4-/6-person apt from €47/87/127 Sep-Jun, €66/127/181 Jul & Aug) are the steal of the Adriatic! Spacious apartments with kitchenette and views out over the Old City walls to the lapping sea. The stone terrace outside has waiter service for those sun-downer drinks as you laze back and consider yourself 'king of the castle', as indeed the previous owners were.

There are two camping grounds, **Tomi** (Ada road; ☎ May-Sep) and **Neptun** (☎ 412 888; Ada road; ☎ May-Sep), and a holiday camp **HTP Velika Plaža** (☎ 413 131; www.velikaplaza.cg.yu; Ada road; r/apt half-board from €19/25; ☎ May-Sep) about 1km east of Milena and adjacent to Velika Plaža.

Eating & Drinking

Bella Vista (☎ 402 088; 26 Novembar bb; dishes €4-8) Suitable for an early breakfast or late-night drink and snack, if you're in private, bed-only accommodation.

Manhattan (☎ 069 032 400; 26 Novembar bb; dishes €4.50-8) Tables crowded with shiny glasses, peaked napkins and a bottle ready to open says that this is an establishment with standards to fulfil. 'Do you like fish?' the waiter asks. 'Let me show you.' And he returns with a platter of sparkling-eyed fish that can be grilled or seasoned with oil, garlic and lemon. Pizza and pasta are also on the menu.

Kafana Bazar (☎ 421 639; 26 Novembar bb; dishes €5-8) An upstairs restaurant that's an ideal idling place when the streets below are heaving with tourists. Gloat in comfort as you enjoy a plate of fried *lignje na žaru* (calamari) or a sublime lunchtime fish soup.

Marinero (☎ 423 009; Mala Plaža; dishes €5-9) The owner was once a ship's cook, and ship's cooks don't last long unless they're good. Often seafaring mates gather here, speaking three or four languages, so for a coffee or *rakija* you'll get the history of the town and tales of the sea. You'll also enjoy a slap-up seafood meal.

Getting There & Away

Minibuses (☎ 462 690) to Shkodër, Albania (€4, one hour, at 6am and 1pm) departs from

outside the post office on 26 Novembar. A service on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday links Montenegro with Dubrovnik and Split (€28) in Croatia. Services depart from Ulcinj (at 5am), Budva (at 6.20am), Kotor (at 7.10am), Herceg Novi (at 8.10am), Dubrovnik (at 9.20am), arriving at Split at 1.50pm. The return leaves at 4pm.

The **bus station** (☎ 413 225) has services along the coast to the Montenegro–Croatia border at Igo (€7.50, three hours, at 5.20am, 7am and 12.45pm), Podgorica (€5, two hours, at 5.45am, noon and 2.50pm) and Prishtina, Kosovo (€27, nine hours, at 7.30pm).

Many minibuses ply the road to Ada (and Velika Plaža) from the market place (€1.50) in July and August.

BUDVA БУДВА

☎ 086 / pop 16,000

Budva is the hub of the Montenegrin holiday coast with fine beaches punctuating the coastline all the way from Budva to Sveti Stefan. Backing them is a large strip of hotels, cafés and shops.

In June the town hosts a pop-orientated music festival plus a summer festival with music, theatre and visual arts in July and August.

Orientation & Information

The bus station is about 1km from the Stari Grad (Old Town). The road called Mediteranska leads into Budva, ending at the harbour and Stari Grad. **Crnogorska Komercijalna Bank** (☎ 451 075; Mediteranska 7; ☎ 8am–8pm Mon–Sat) has an ATM, and cashes travellers cheques. There's also a **Tourist information office** (☎ 402 814; Stari Grad; ☎ 11.30am–6.30pm Mon–Fri, 1.30pm–6.30pm Sat Oct–Apr, 9am–9pm May–Sep).

Sights & Activities

Budva's big tourist-puller is its old **walled town**. Levelled by two earthquakes in 1979, it has since been completely rebuilt and become a tourist attraction with small boutique shops, restaurants, cafés and bars. It's so picturesque it seems almost contrived.

The **Budva Museum** (☎ 453 308; Petra I Petrovića 11, Stari Grad; adult/child €1.50/0.50; ☎ 8am–8pm Tue–Fri, 10am–4pm Sat & Sun) proudly shows off its three floors of well-laid-out exhibits covering the everyday from pre-Roman to the late 1700s. On the top floor is the best piece, a bronze 5th-century helmet with holes in the back that

maybe tell of the wearer's final day. Down on the ground floor, the floor is dug out to reveal the original street below.

The Stari Grad beach is pebbly and average. **Mogren Beach**, 500m to the right of the Grand Hotel Avala, is better but still pebbly, while for sandcastle building you need the 5km-string of **sandy beaches** arching towards Sveti Stefan. The beaches and swimming are the main attractions for the hordes of summer-break visitors, and in summer there are plenty of boat trips on offer at the harbour.

The former island fishing village of **Sveti Stefan**, now linked to the mainland, is an exclusive hotel complex with a €5 entrance fee for nonguests.

The tourist information office has an outline map of shortish walks and points of interest, around the Budva area.

Sleeping

Hippo Hostel (☎ 452 206; www.hippo.com; Proleterska IV 37; dm/r €14/32; ☎) A potentially good and well-needed hostel that has opened in Budva and seems to be doing well. Let us know what you think.

JAMB Travel (☎ 452 992; www.jamb-travel.com; Mediteranska 23; r €4.50–15, 2-/5-person apt €19/80; ☎ 8am–3pm Mon–Fri Nov–May, to 8pm Jun–Oct) Books accommodation and organises day tours around Montenegro.

Hotel Mogren (☎ 451 780; fax 452 041; Mediteranska 1; s/d €55/86) A bit like an elderly aunt you've become fond of, the Mogren has become a favourite of ours. Sure it's seen better days but the location (jostling the old city) and price are mighty tempters. Ask for a room with a view of the old city and the sea.

Hotel Fontana (☎ 452 153; fontana.lekic@cg.yu; Slovenska obala 23; s/d from €45/70) Sitting pretty in a garden area by the harbour. With a small terrace and café-bar to chat with fellow guests, the Fontana has the feel of a holiday home. Rooms are smallish but good, and most on the upper floors have sea views.

There are camping options at **Autocamp Avala** (☎ 451 205; Boreti; ☎ Jun–Sep) and **Budva Autocamp** (Jadranski put bb); contact JAMB Travel for details.

Eating & Drinking

Restaurant Jadran (☎ 451 028; Slovenska Obala 10; dishes €5–10) When you want to feel special, dine at the Jadran, which is considered Budva's best restaurant. You can eat a lobster for €60 per kilogram,

or a substantial soup or *čevapčići* for €2 – the choice is your wallet's. Mussels Jadran is a justifiable excuse to enjoy a tangy jus of oil, lemon and garlic mopped up with wads of bread and washed down with a chilled Montenegrin white wine.

Lazo i Milan (☎ 451 468; 13 Jul bb; dishes €6–9) A simple restaurant hidden from most, except the discerning locals. Pasta dishes just like Mama makes them except this mama is a burly Montenegrin chef who can cook up a storm of gastronomic delight with his sauces.

Old Fisherman's Pub (☎ 069 553 347; Slovenska Obala bb; dishes €3–6) A large drinking place with a patio, on the edge of the harbour. Snacks and an English breakfast are available.

Chest O'Sheas (☎ 069 579 468; Stari Grad; ☎ 6pm–late) Near the tourist office, this shoebox of a bar, with Guinness on tap to attract those who haven't made the jump to Montenegrin beer.

Bus station café (Ivana Milutinovića; dishes €2–3). The best cheapie in town in a choose-and-point cafeteria.

Getting There & Away

The **bus station** (☎ 456 000; Ivana Milutinovića) has frequent, almost hourly, services to the coastal towns and inland to Podgorica. fares are between €1 and €3.

KOTOR KOTOP

☎ 082 / pop 23,500

Picturesque Kotor with its walled town nestling at the head of southern Europe's deepest fjord has Montenegro's most dramatic setting. In broody weather the atmosphere becomes all Wagnerian, dark shadows cut with fingers of sunlight while on a sunny day the wind-ripples on the purple water sparkle. Stari Grad (Old Town), lying under the lee of a mountain, is a labyrinth of cobbled laneways linking small squares containing ancient churches and former aristocratic mansions.

Orientation

The western flank of the funnel-shaped Stari Grad lies against Kotor Bay. An 18th-century gateway off Jadranski Put, which runs along the waterside, leads into the old town. The bus station is 1km away on the Budva road.

Information

Forza (☎ 304 352; Stari Grad; per hr €2) Two computer terminals in a library-styled bar.

Information booth (☎ 325 950; western gateway;

☎ 9am–3pm Mon–Sat Oct–Apr, to 9pm Mon–Sat May–Sep) Tourist and private accommodation information; maps and brochures.

Montenegrobanka (☎ 323 946; Trg Octobarske Revolucije) ATM; cashes travellers cheques.

Sights

The fun is simply in wandering around this atmospheric town popping into old churches, dawdling for coffee at the pavement cafés, and people-watching. The energetic can slog up to the old fortifications on the mountainside above Kotor to scan the huge fjord in which Kotor hides. Similar views can be seen from the string of hairpin bends that lead over the mountains to Cetinje.

As a former Mediterranean naval power, Kotor has a proud history and the **Maritime Museum** (☎ 304 720; Stari Grad; admission €1.50; ☎ 8am–2pm Mon–Fri, 9am–noon Sat & Sun) covers much of it in its three storeys of displays. A leaflet in English helps explain its magnificent collection of photographs, uniforms, weapons, painting and models of ships.

St Tryphon Cathedral was originally built in the 11th century but earthquakes have meant subsequent reconstructions. The interior is a masterpiece of Romanesque-Gothic architecture with slender columns thrusting upwards to support a series of vaulted roofs. A reliquary chapel holds some of the remains of St Tryphon, the patron saint of Kotor, plus a portion of the Holy Cross.

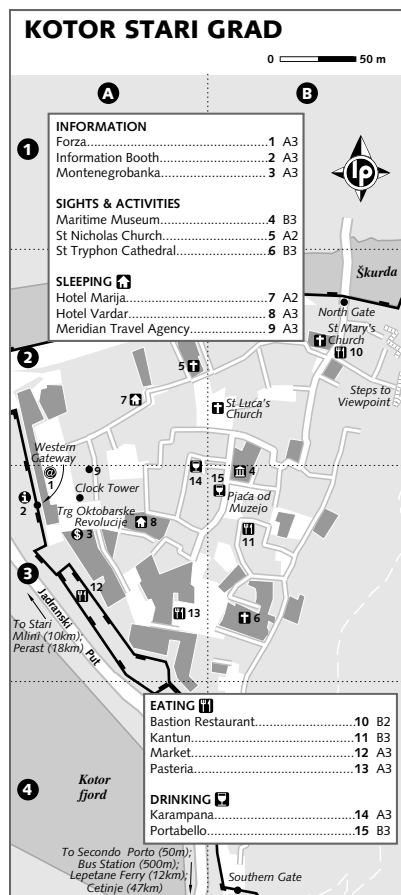
Breathe in the smell of incense and beeswax in the plain and unadorned 1909 Orthodox **St Nicholas Church**. The silence, the iconostasis with its silver panels in bas relief, the dark wood against bare grey walls and the filtered rays of light through the upper dome create an eerie atmosphere.

Sleeping

The best deals are private rooms starting from €10 per person. Ask around, at the information booth or a travel agency. In summer you're likely to be approached at the bus station.

Meridian Travel Agency (☎ 323 448; travel@cg.yu; Stari Grad; r €10–20, apt €30–40; ☎ 9am–2pm & 6–7pm Mon–Fri, 9am–2pm Sat) This ever-helpful agency in a small lane behind the clock tower books private and hotel accommodation in and around the city.

Hotel Vardar (☎ 325 084; vardar@cg.yu; Trg Octobarske Revolucije; s/d from €32/48) Decorated in dark brown, cream and white that's sooo old-Yugoslavia.



However it's an affordable place commanding the square just inside the city walls where the big plus is not having to lug your bags far into this pedestrian-only city.

Hotel Marija (☎ 325 062; hotel.marija.kotor@cg.yu; Stari Grad; s/d/tr/q from €44/63/84/112; 🏠) Converted from a historic mansion, this boutique hotel is tucked away in the cobbled laneways of the old city. The oak panelling throughout adds a charm, distinction and warmth. A small lobby bar provides conspiratorial planning space for the day's sightseeing, and comfort for tired feet on your return.

Eating & Drinking

The lanes house several bakeries. Munch on *burek*, pizza slices and, for an afternoon

break, cherry strudel – a juicy speciality of the region.

Kantun (☎ 325 757; Pjača od muzeja; dishes €3-8) Without the techno music, this wood-beam restaurant with a bare stone interior, could be a rural *kafana* (small basic café) serving up traditional Montenegrin fare to rough-handed farmers, rather than occupying Kotor prime real estate. Make sure you sample the Njegoša cheeses and the *roštiljska kobasica* (homemade sausages).

Pasteria (☎ 322 269; Pjaca Sveti Tripuna, Stari Grad; dishes €3-10) Choose pizza, pasta or snacks from the multilingual menu. Sited opposite the twin towers of St Tryphon Cathedral, this elegant eatery has one of the best reputations in the old city. Late risers can breakfast here until 2pm. While waiting for your order, study the large photographs of 19th century Kotor on the wall.

Stari Mlini (☎ 333 555; Ljuta bb; dishes €5-30) On the road 10km towards Perast, this is an old converted mill on the edge of a river that races through the restaurant's terrace area. Inside is all stonework, heavy wooden beams and tables set with glistening glasses, silver cutlery and white linen – all illuminated by warm candlelight. Large 200-year-old stone jars contain cheese stored in oil, a house speciality on a traditional Montenegrin menu enlivened by a variety of fish dishes. Come for a lazy afternoon meal on the terrace or an intimate dinner inside.

Bastion Restaurant (☎ 322 116; dishes €6-30) By St Mary's church, Bastion Restaurant is a busy lunchtime venue so it's best to get there early. Any slight indecision in ordering and the waiter will wheel in a platter of fish to tempt you, and if those don't say 'eat me', there's a varied menu with veggie options to choose from. The seafood salad starter is recommended.

Market (Jadranski put; 🕒 7am-2pm) Kotor's produce market is just outside the city walls. Big juicy hamburgers can be bought for €1 plus a variety of fruit, bread and cheeses.

Secondo Porto (☎ 334 342; cnr Budva Rd & Njegoša; admission €2-10; 🕒 11pm-late) Indeed the 'second port' for Kotor's revellers who mass onto the disco's three floors after the old town's bars close. Local and 'imported' star DJs spin the music.

Kotor's cafés and bars, which are quiet places by day, turn werewolf on weekend nights when they throb to techno and other rhythms. Try the **Portobello** (☎ 068 407 200; Pjača od muzeja; 🕒 8am-11am Oct-Apr, 8am-1am May-Sep) and around the corner, the **Karampana** (☎ 051 451).

Getting There & Away

If you are driving, the shortest way to Herceg Novi is via the ferry at Lepetane (€3.50 per car, every half-hour). The bus station has frequent services along the coast.

The **bus station** (☎ 325 809) has frequent, almost hourly, services to the coastal towns and inland to Podgorica. fares are between €1 and €3.

AROUND KOTOR

Perast is a small waterside village about 18km from Kotor and out in the bay is the remarkable, artificial island called **Lady of the Rock**. Every 22 July over the last 550 years, local people have sailed here to drop stones overboard. Their efforts at island creation have been made that bit easier by using a large underwater rock as a foundation, and by the later sinking of 87 captured ships loaded with rocks.

In the village, St Nicholas is an unfinished church housing a small **museum** (admission €0.50; 🕒 9am-5pm) with a collection of vestments, icons and copies of Italian religious art.

Between mid-May and mid-October boats regularly ply between the island and Perast (€1 return); just ask on the waterfront. An hourly minibus service connects with Kotor (€1).

CETINJE ЦЕТИЊЕ

☎ 086 / pop 19,000

Nestled in a green vale surrounded by rough, grey mountains, Cetinje is an odd mix of former capital and overgrown village where single-storey cottages and stately mansions share the same street.

Several of those mansions, dating from royal times when European ambassadors fêted the social scene, have become museums or schools for art and music. Cetinje Monastery, also with a significant museum, is the town's spiritual home.

Further afield lies some astounding scenery, the panoramic view of Lake Skadar from Pavlova Strana, the old bridge at Rijeka Crnojevića, and the plummeting road down to Kotor.

When that seaside heat has burnt just a little too much, Cetinje is a pleasantly cool and enjoyable day trip up from the coast.

Orientation & Information

A short walk from the bus stand leads to Balšića Pazar, the main square, with a big wall map to help you get oriented. There are no banks or ATMs here.

Sights MUSEUMS

The former parliament, and Cetinje's most imposing building, is now the **National Museum of Montenegro** (☎ 230 555; Novice Cerovića; admission €5; 🕒 9am-5pm Mon-Fri Dec-Apr, to 5pm May-Nov), which comprises a history section and an art gallery. The entrance ticket also covers Cetinje's other museums.

The Art Gallery celebrates Montenegrin and regional art but the prime exhibit is the precious 5th-century Icon of Phillarmos, Madonna and Child. The History exhibits showcase Montenegro from 60,000 BC to the present day. On display are many old books, copies of frescoes, 44 captured Turkish flags and the coat (three bullet holes in the back) of Duke Danilo. He was the last *vladika* of Montenegro and was assassinated in Kotor in 1860 by an aggrieved tribal leader.

The **Biljarda Hall** (Billiard Hall; ☎ 231 050; 🕒 9am-5pm Apr-Oct, to 3pm Mon-Fri Nov-Mar) opposite the National Museum, was the 1832 residence of *vladika* Petar II Petrović Njegoš, and is now a museum dedicated to him. The hall housed the nation's first billiard table, hence the name, and now shelters a fascinating scale relief map of Montenegro created by the Austrians in 1917.

The 1871 **State Museum** (☎ 230 555; King Nikola Sq; 🕒 9am-5pm Apr-Oct, to 5pm Mon-Fri Nov-Mar) was the former residence of Nikola Petrović I, last king of Montenegro. Although looted during WWII, sufficient furnishings, many stern portraits and period weapons remain to give a picture of the times. The souvenir shop sells an illustrated map showing the 12 former 18th- and 19th-century embassies in Cetinje. Some were just plain townhouses (Belgium), while others were ornate three-storey mansions with baroque flourishes (Russia).

The new **Ethnographic Museum** (King Nikola Sq; 🕒 9am-3pm Nov-Apr, to 5pm May-Oct) has displays of traditional Montenegrin clothing. If there have ever been reports of yeti in the mountains of Montenegro then it might be down to the black, hooded, long-haired, full-length cape that shepherds wear, and there's an example here.

CETINJE MONASTERY

Founded in 1484, and rebuilt in 1785, **Cetinje Monastery** (☎ 231 021; 🕒 8am-7pm May-Oct) has for the curious, or devout, a portion of the true Cross. But their proudest possession is the mummified right hand of St John the Baptist, set in a bejewelled casket with a little glass

window. You will have to be really persuasive to see it, as it's not normally shown to visitors.

The monastery **museum** contains a copy of the 1494 *Oktoih* (Book of the Eight Voices), one of the oldest collections of liturgical songs in a Slavic language. There's also a collection of portraits, vestments, ancient handwritten texts and gifts from Russian churches. Again, you will have to be persuasive.

There are frequent, almost hourly, services to Budva and Kotor, and inland to Podgorica. Fares are between €1 and €3.

AROUND CETINJE

At **Rijeka Crnojevića**, 14km from Cetinje, is an old and pretty four-arch pedestrian bridge that spans the tail end of Lake Skadar. The bridge is best seen in the golden glow of the setting sun when the light paints a mirror image in the still waters.

Then 5km further on, **Pavlova Strana** provides a bird's-eye view of a sweeping double-back bend as the lake turns around a mountain spur shaped like a turtle-shell. In the distance, under a two-humped mountain, you should see the town of Virpazar glistening white above the lake.

Twenty kilometres from Cetinje is **Mt Lovćen** (1749m), the 'Black Mountain' that gave Montenegro its Italian name (*monte* means 'mountain', *negro* means 'black'). From the end of the road 461 steps take you to the summit and the mausoleum of Petar II Petrović Njegoš, revered poet and ruler. From the top are sweeping views of the Bay of Kotor, mountains, coast and reputedly, on a clear morning, Italy.

HERCEG NOVI ХЕРЦЕГ НОВИ

☎ 088 / pop 34,000

Herceg Novi, another attractive walled town, a day trip from Kotor or Dubrovnik is the nearest town to the Croatian border. The bus station is on the main highway. There's a three-day music festival **Sunčane skale** (Sunny Steps) in the second week of July.

The travel agency **Gorbis** (☎ 322 085; Njegoševa 64; s/d/apt from €10/14/20; ☎ 8am-7pm) books accommodation, flight and ferry tickets. **Crnogorska Komercijalna Bank** (☎ 322 666; Trg Nikole Đurkovića; ☎ 7am-8pm Mon-Sat) cashes travellers cheques and has an ATM.

Sleeping & Eating

Private rooms are a good option. If you're here to catch a bus, contact the **Poznanović family**

(☎ 323 708; s/d €15/20) in the house behind the bus station or contact Gorbis.

While other cafés dot this square **Lokanda** (☎ 321 699 10; Đurokevice Trg bb; pizzas €3.50-5 pasta €4 ice cream sundaes €2-2.50) seems to have the public's affection; people come here to meet, take coffee or read the paper. Enjoy a refreshing lemonade prepared from real lemons, or squander your appetite on a pizza or creamy sundae.

There are plenty of very tasty cheap fill-up meals at **Konoba Hercegovina** (☎ 332 800; 18 Đurokevice Trg; €2-3), an unpretentious national-cuisine restaurant.

Getting There & Away

The **bus station** (☎ 21 225) has frequent, almost hourly, services along the coast and inland to Podgorica. Fares are between €1 and €3.

A comfortable Centrotans coach travels daily to Mostar (€9, 4½ hours, at 8am) and onto Sarajevo (€17, seven hours); other services leave at 6.45am, 7.30pm, 9pm and 10pm. Buses also go to Dubrovnik (€9, two hours, at 9.30am and 3.30pm).

NORTHERN MONTENEGRO

OSTROG MONASTERY ОСТРОГ МАНАСТИР

Some 20km south of Nikšić is the **monastery of Ostrog**, precipitously resting on a cliff face, 900m above the Zeta valley. A long windy road off the Podgorica-Nikšić road eventually makes it to a lower car park, from where penitent pilgrims then plod another 3km uphill to the monastery. Nonpilgrims and the pure of heart may drive to the upper carpark.

The monastery was built out of two caves in 1665 to hide Archbishop Vasilije Jovanovic, when he was fleeing from the Turks. Vasilije never left, and praying over his bones is credited with curing the most serious of illnesses, which accounts for the pilgrims. It's also alleged that the Bosnian Serb war criminals Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić have hidden here too.

DURMITOR NATIONAL PARK ДУРМИТОР

Magnificent scenery ratchets up to the stupendous in this national park, where ice has

carved out a dramatic mountain landscape. Some 18 lakes dot the Durmitor Range with the largest, **Crno jezero** (Black Lake), a pleasant 3km walk from Žabljak. Dominating all is the rounded mass of **Međed** (2287m) rearing up behind the lake and flanked by other peaks, including **Bobotov Kuk** (2523m). Slitting the earth's crust for 80km, the 1.3km-deep **Tara Canyon** is best seen from a rock promontory at Curevac, a €10 taxi ride away from Žabljak.

From December to March, Durmitor is Montenegro's major ski resort while in summer it's a popular place for hiking, rafting and many other activities. The weather is very changeable so be prepared, even in summer.

Orientation & Information

The centre of Žabljak is where the Nikšić road meets the Đurdevica Tara bridge road. Here there's a **tourist information centre** (☎ 089-361 569; ☎ 8am-8pm Dec-Mar, to 3pm Apr-Nov), with maps and fine picture books, a taxi stand and a bus stop. The bus station, on the Nikšić road, is at the southern end of town.

Visa cardholders can withdraw cash at the Hotel Jezera where there's also **internet access** (per 30min €1). **Durmitor National Park** (www.durmitor.org.com) has a useful website.

Sleeping & Eating

All the hotel restaurants are open to non-residents.

Sveti Đordije (☎ /fax 089-361 367; tasaint@cg.yu; Njegoševa bb; s/d from €11/16, 2-/3-/4-person apt from €22/33/44, B&B/half-board from €4/9; ☎ 9am-9pm) This agency has its finger on Žabljak's private-accommodation pulse.

Hotel Jezera (☎ 089-360 206; hmdurmitor@hotmail.com; Njegoševa bb; s with half-board €30-35, d €50-60, tr €60-75; ☎) OK if you're happy in crowds, as this large hotel takes big groups of skiers and summer holidaymakers. The rooms are spacious, there's a pleasant restaurant and an aperitif bar, and a summer swimming pool (nonguests €5).

Planinka (☎ 089-361 344; Narodni Heroja 5; s/d/tr B&B €23/40/48; ☎) Much the same as the Jezera but with no swimming pool.

Restaurant Durmitor (☎ 060 657 316; Božidara Žugića bb; dishes €4-8) 'Don't hesitate to tell us if you have a complaint', says the menu, which shows a (justifiable) confidence in its food – special home-cooking in what is just a small

wooden hut seating 20 bodies. Should be warm in winter.

National Restaurant (☎ 089-261 337; Božidara Žugića 8; dishes €4.50-8) A pearl of a place that's small, but not crowded, and offers the best food around. There are broths and hot appetisers with slugs of domestic brandy to defeat the winter chill, or grilled trout and salad in summer. They also have pleasant rooms (singles/doubles €24/48) upstairs if you want some quiet accommodation.

Autocamp Ivan-do and Autocamp Mlinski Potok are camping grounds, without facilities, uphill from the national park office.

Activities

In winter there's skiing, snowboarding or scooting around behind a dog-drawn team. In summer rafting trips charge through the steeply forested Tara Gorge and spill over countless foaming rapids. The park also offers horse riding, cycling, mountaineering and hiking on various marked trails around the mountain slopes.

Ski Centar Durmitor (☎ 089-361 579; www.durmitor.org.com/ski_centar.php; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Sat), opposite Hotel Žabljak, arranges ski passes (€12/70 per day/week), ski lessons (€5 to €10 per lessons) and equipment rental (€5 to €10 per day).

While rafting is a group activity individuals can join in, if there's space available. Contact **Sveti Đordije** (☎ /fax 089-31 367; tasaint@cg.yu; Njegoševa bb; ☎ 8am-8pm), which is a fount of information (in English), and offers all-inclusive half-/one-/two-day trips costing €60/120/250.

Sveti Đordije also organises summer day tours typically for six to eight people (individuals may join) at €30 each to the **Piva Monastery**, which is near the Bosnian border, and has remarkable frescoes.

The **Durmitor National Park office** (☎ 089-360 228; ☎ 7am-2pm Mon-Fri), next to Hotel Durmitor, has park maps and runs rafting trips (€150 for a group of 10), horse-riding tours (half/whole day €25/50) led by an English-speaking guide, and walking tours.

Getting There & Away

There are buses to Belgrade (€18, 10 hours, at 9.30am, 11am and 4.30pm) and Podgorica (€6, 3½ hours, at 8am, 8.30am and 12.45pm). However check with the **bus station** (☎ 089-61 318) as schedules change regularly.

MONTENEGRO DIRECTORY

ACCOMMODATION

Most Montenegrin hotels, when compared to accommodation on the coast and Žabljak, are quite expensive, so look out for signs saying 'rooms', 'sobe' or 'zimmer'. These can often be of a hotel standard but rather more personable; they range from just a room sharing a bathroom to an apartment with several rooms including a kitchen and private bathroom. The coast has some summer camping grounds as do the national parks.

Where there are seasonal differences we quote the high-season price and, unless otherwise mentioned, the tariff includes breakfast, except in private accommodation, and rooms have private bathrooms. Don't forget to bargain for a discount for several days' stay.

ACTIVITIES

Durmitor (p562) is Montenegro's main activity centre. In winter it's the country's main resort for skiing, snowboarding and snow sledging by dog or motor. In the summer hikers and climbers flock to the same mountains while the brave and nervous shoot the rapids down below in the Tara canyon.

BOOKS

Tim Judah has a good eye on the regional scene so try *The Serbs: History, Myth and the Destruction of Yugoslavia*. Sabrina Ramet's *Balkan Babel* is an engaging look at Yugoslavia from Tito to Milošević, while *Montenegro: The Divided Land*, by Thomas Fleming, is an in-depth history of the country.

Wild Europe, by Bozidar Jezenik, is a great read and full of quirky nuggets of information, see the boxed text on right for more information.

The fictional work *Montenegro*, by Starling Lawrence, is a turn-of-the-20th-century political potboiler about a British spy lurking around Montenegro, seeking to advantage his country's interests as the Ottoman empire collapses.

BUSINESS HOURS

Banks keep long hours, often 8am to 7pm weekdays and 8am to noon Saturday. Shops open at 8am and close at 8pm on weekdays

HEAD COUNT

According to Bozidar Jezenik's *Wild Europe*, the Montenegrins decapitated their dead or wounded enemies, and kept the heads as a sign of their valour. In a society that did not have hereditary rank it was a means of establishing one's social prestige, so the more heads the better. The custom persisted into the mid-19th century and old men well into the 20th century would boast of the heads they had taken in their youth. Visitors may rest assured that now they'll always keep their heads in Montenegro.

and 4pm on Saturdays; during summer, shops in holiday resorts will stay open longer and also open on Sundays. Cafés, restaurants and bars usually open around 8am and close at midnight. Most government offices close on Saturday and Sunday.

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Despite new laws, which most seem to ignore, the major annoyance is the incessant smoking in public places.

It's fine to discuss politics but be prepared to listen and ask people's opinions rather than foisting your own upon them.

Check with the police before photographing any official building they're guarding.

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

At the time of writing Montenegro still had to establish embassies or consulates in other countries. Your own government's department of foreign affairs or the Serbian Embassy in your home country may be able to help.

Embassies & Consulates in Montenegro

For countries not on this list, contact their offices in Belgrade, which may still handle representation for Montenegro. The following (except Croatia) are represented in Podgorica.

Bulgaria (☎ 655 009; 10 Vukitze Mitrovitch)

Croatia (☎ 082-323 127; Šuranj 248, Kotor)

France (☎ 665 148; Hercegovacka 10)

Germany (☎ 201 070; Hercegovacka 10)

Hungary (☎ 602880; Kralje Nikole 104)

Romania (☎ 618 040; 40 Vukice Mitrovich)

UK (☎ 205 461; Trg Vektra, zgrada Cijevna Komer 11/3)

USA (☎ 225 417; Krševac bb)

HOLIDAYS

Orthodox churches celebrate Easter one to five weeks later than other churches. Public holidays in Montenegro include the following:

New Year 1 and 2 January

Orthodox Christmas 7 January

International Labour Days 1 and 2 May

Statehood Day 13 July

INTERNET RESOURCES

Montenegro Tourist Organisation (www.visit-montenegro.cg.yu)

Montenegro Beauty (www.montenegrobeauty.com) Tourist information.

Montenegrin Association of America (www.montenegro.org) Has a few worthwhile pages, some out of date.

Government of the Republic of Montenegro (www.gom.cg.yu)

MONEY

Montenegro uses the euro. ATMs accepting Visa, MasterCard and their variants are widespread in major towns. MasterCard, Visa and Diners Club are widely accepted by businesses too. **Western Union** (www.westernunion.com) transfers can be made at most banks and major post offices. Most banks cash hard-currency travellers cheques and again the euro is preferable.

POST

Parcels should be taken unsealed to the main post office for inspection. Allow time to check the post office's repackaging and complete the transaction. You can receive mail, addressed poste restante, in all towns for a small charge.

TELEPHONE

Press the i button on public phones for dialling commands in English. The international operator is ☎ 901.

Mobile Phones

Numbers starting with ☎ 069 reputedly gives the best service and a starter pack containing

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

- Police ☎ 92
- Ambulance ☎ 94
- Fire brigade ☎ 93
- Motoring Assistance ☎ 987
- Road Conditions ☎ 9807

a SIM card costs €10, including €5 worth of calls. We had occasional problems with text messages to and from abroad.

Phonecards

Phone cards worth €2 and €5 don't give enough time for a decent international call, so use telephone centres at post offices.

VISAS

Tourist visas are not required for citizens of most European countries, Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, and the USA. South Africans and everyone else need to apply for visas. The website of the Montenegrin government (www.gom.cg.yu) has details.

WOMEN TRAVELLERS

Other than a cursory interest shown in them by men, solo women should find travelling is hassle-free and easy in Montenegro.

TRANSPORT IN MONTENEGRO

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Air

Apart from holiday charter flights, Montenegro is not well served by international airlines; this may change with independence. Currently Adria and Austrian Airlines are the only regional airlines serving international hubs like London and Vienna. European discount airlines have yet to fly to Montenegro and currently Dubrovnik and Split (Croatia) are the nearest airports.

Montenegro is served by **Podgorica airport** (TGD; ☎ 081-243 726) and **Tivat airport** (TIV; ☎ 082-673 551); only JAT and Montenegro Airlines fly from Tivat.

Adria Airlines (code JP; ☎ 081-241 154; www.adria-airways.com)

Austrian Airlines (code OS; ☎ 081-606 170; www.aau.com)

JAT (code JU; ☎ 081-664 740; www.jat.com)

Montenegro Airlines (code YM; ☎ 081-664 411; www.montenegro-airlines.cg.yu)

Land

BORDER CROSSINGS

You can easily enter Montenegro by land from any of its neighbours and no bus changes are required. Entering Albania involves a €10 fee.

BICYCLE

You will have no problems bringing a bicycle into Montenegro but remember it's a hilly country. There are few cyclists so road-users are not cycle savvy.

BUS

There's a well-developed bus service along the coast to Dubrovnik and Split (see p167) plus a service from Herceg Novi to Mostar and Sarajevo in Bosnia and Hercegovina (p115). Twice daily minibuses ply from Ulcinj to Shkodër, Albania (see p80). Every bus station will have services to Belgrade in Serbia; on average the journey time is nine hours and the fare €20.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Drivers need an International Driving Permit, and vehicles need Green Card (international third-party) insurance, or insurance (from €80 a month) must be bought at the border.

TRAIN

Montenegro's only international rail connection is to Belgrade, Serbia, from Bar on the coast via Sutomore and Podgorica. For onward connections see p556.

Sea

Ferries sail between Bar, Kotor and Italy, see p556.

DRIVING OFFENCES *Patrick Horton*

Within 10 minutes of driving away from the Podgorica hire car office I copped a €15 fine from a traffic policeman for not obeying a turn right arrow. That was in 2004; in 2006 I managed 30 minutes before being pulled over. I was told that I had committed two offences; my fog lights were on as well as the parking lights that the car hire firm told me were now mandatory for daylight driving. I handed over my documents, which the policeman clutched as tightly as a wad of euro in a high wind. He read them and announced that I would have to go back to the post office in Podgorica, pay the fine and return to him with the receipt before I could have the documents. No way, I thought, so I put on my best dumb foreigner act and he relented. Later I found out that he had no right to retain my documents but I never found out what the second offence was.

GETTING AROUND**Bicycle**

Cyclists are a rare species even in the cities. There are no special provisions for them and don't expect drivers to be careful around cyclists.

Bus

The bus service is extensive and reliable and covers all of Montenegro. The usual fare between towns is about €2; luggage carried below is charged at €0.50 per piece.

Car & Motorcycle

Independent travel is an ideal way to gad about and discover the country. Beware of traffic police with speed radar guns; they also do spot checks of your documents and the car.

AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATIONS

The **Auto-Moto Savez Serbia and Montenegro** (Serbia & Montenegro Automotive Association; ☎ 9800; www.amsj.co.yu) web page has details on Montenegrin road conditions.

HIRE

The major European car-hire companies have a presence in Podgorica but **Meridian Rent a Car** (☎ 081-234 944, 069 316 66), which has offices in Podgorica, Budva and Bar, is a good, cheap option.

Make sure the tyres are good and all lights and indicators work. Cars are required to carry a first-aid kit, an emergency stop warning triangle, spare tyre and spare bulbs; the police can fine you for not having these.

ROAD RULES

In Montenegro, driving is on the right, seat belts must be worn and the drink-driving limit is 0.05%. Speed limits are 80km/h on main roads and 40km/h in urban areas. A recently introduced law requires you to drive with your parking lights on during the day.

Train

At the time of research **Jugoslovenske Železnice** (JŽ, Yugoslav Railways; www.yurail.co.yu, in Serbian) were operating the trains from Belgrade that run along the highly scenic line down through Podgorica to Bar and terminating at Sutomore; their website gives timetable details. Other railway lines in Montenegro were not operational but may one day form a network for a Montenegrin Railways organisation.

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