

Bosnia & Hercegovina



Bosnia & Herzegovina

More than a decade after Bosnia and Herzegovina was only heard of in international news as a conflict area, this 'most easterly point of the West and the most westerly point of the East' is now trying to get itself back on the world's travel maps. The Bosnia and Herzegovina of today manages to combine the great outdoors and age-old glories of cultural diversity with modern global cultural trends in its race to catch up with the rest of Europe.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has been fought over and colonised more times than it's worth counting, but the 500-year Ottoman rule and a relatively short-lived Austro-Hungarian presence have left a lasting imprint on the country. Sarajevo has a melange of shady nooks in the glittering Baščaršija bazaar, from where the nearby peaks of the Catholic Cathedral, Orthodox Church and the domed roof of the Old Temple (Stari Hram) Synagogue can be seen looking up to the heavens alongside numerous minarets. Trendy youth frequent the fashionable bars and clubs, while the older population drinks steaming black coffees sweetened by Turkish delight.

Mostar's Old Bridge has sprung back up over the racy Neretva River, and tanned young things are once again hurling themselves in it, keeping the tourists amused. The heart-stopping whirls of the Una and Neretva Rivers are rafted by the brave and the screaming. The tiny Jajce (literally 'little egg') has capricious waterfalls in the town centre; Herzegovina's cascading Kravice is like a miniature Niagara (or so the locals like to think). Fluorescent two-in-one Jesus and Mary pictures, life-size popes and fashionable bottles of holy water keep the pilgrims safe in the popular village of Međugorje.

All these things are once again rousing the travellers' interest in this forgotten country: a fusion of nature and nightlife, served up against a diverse cultural background.

FAST FACTS

- **Area** 51,129 sq km
- **Capital** Sarajevo
- **Currency** KM; €1 = 1.96KM; US\$1 = 1.63KM; UK£1 = 2.85KM; A\$1 = 1.23KM; ¥100 = 1.48KM; NZ\$1 = 1.14KM
- **Famous for** 1984 Winter Olympics, the bridge at Mostar
- **Key phrases** *Zdravo* (hello), *hvala* (thanks), *molim* (please), *dovidenja* (goodbye)
- **Official languages** Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian
- **Population** 3.99 million (estimate)
- **Telephone codes** country code ☎ 387; international access code ☎ 00
- **Visas** not required for most visitors, see p132



HIGHLIGHTS

- The capital **Sarajevo** (p95), where you can enjoy a magnificent *ćevap*, admire grand mosques, churches and synagogues while bargaining over a copper pot or some leather goods in the old Baščaršija bazaar
- The newly rebuilt **Old Bridge** (Stari Most; p111) of Mostar, with dizzying views of the speedy Neretva River below
- The site of the Virgin Mary epiphanyes, **Međugorje** (p119), where you can buy your grandma a new pink rosary and your niece a Virgin Mary pencil case
- The hasty waterfalls in the town centre of **Jajce** (p124), and the compelling medieval remains here
- Rafting on the twists of the **Una River** (p128) amidst towering gorges near Bihać

ITINERARIES

- **One week to 10 days** Arrive in Mostar from coastal Croatia and spend the day roaming the Old Town; take a day trip to Blagaj, Međugorje and/or the Kravice waterfalls for a refreshing swim before wandering north to Sarajevo. You could easily spend three or four days in Sarajevo, but day-trip options include Jajce, Travnik or exploring the mountains around Sarajevo along with the locals. Alternatively, have a picnic at the mouth of the Bosna River (Vrelo Bosne) just outside the capital. If you arrive from Zagreb, then start this itinerary in Sarajevo.
- **Two weeks** Adding to the above, visitors can spend more time exploring Herzegovina, spending a day hiking in Podveležje, checking out the medieval necropolis at Radimlja, or visiting Trebinje, before heading to Bihać for some white-water rafting. Extra days in Sarajevo are always a plus, and if you choose to head on to Serbia and Montenegro, do so via Banja Luka.

CLIMATE & WHEN TO GO

Bosnia and Herzegovina has a mix of Mediterranean and central European climates (see Climate Charts p388). Bosnia is hot in summer but chilly in winter, especially at higher elevations where snowfall can last until April. Herzegovina has a Mediterranean climate with scorching summers (40°C) and mild, windy winters.

The best time to visit is spring or summer; skiers should come between December and

WARNING: LAND MINES

There are hundreds of thousands of mines and unexploded ordnance here, not only in the country but also around suburbs and in war-damaged buildings.

Sarajevo's **Mine Action Centre** (Map p97; ☎ 033-209 762; www.bhmac.org; Zmaj od Bosne 8; ☎ 8am-4pm Mon-Fri) has valuable mine-awareness information.

Outside city centres the golden rule is to stick to asphalt and concrete surfaces. Don't enter war-damaged buildings, avoid areas that look abandoned, and never go to places where you don't see the locals go.

February. There's no need to worry about a seasonal crush of tourists just yet.

HISTORY

Early History

Bosnia has been a cultural cocktail from the beginning. People from all over the world, including Italy, Spain, parts of Africa, Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt and Palestine have at various times populated the areas of Dalmatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The region's ancient inhabitants were Illyrians, who were followed by the Romans in 9 AD. The Romans first settled around the mineral springs at Ilidža (p110), near Sarajevo.

HOW MUCH?

- **Short taxi ride** 5KM
- **Internet access per hour** 3KM
- **Coffee** 1KM
- **Slug of šljivovica (plum brandy)** 1.50KM
- **Movie ticket** 3KM

LP INDEX

- **Litre of petrol** 1.56KM
- **Litre of water** 2KM
- **Half-litre of beer** 2KM
- **Souvenir Bosnian coffee set** from 25KM
- **Street snack (burek)** 2KM



When the Roman Empire was divided in AD 395, the Drina River, today the border between Bosnia and Hercegovina and Serbia and Montenegro, became the line that divided the Western Roman Empire from Byzantium.

The Slavs arrived in the late 6th and early 7th centuries. Bosnia's medieval history is a much debated and politically sensitive subject, mainly because different groups have frequently tried to claim authenticity and territorial rights on the basis of their interpretation of the country's religious make-up before the arrival of the Turks. During this period (1180–1463) Bosnia and Hercegovina became one of the most powerful states in the Western Balkans,

and gained control over large parts of the Dalmatian coast.

The first Turkish raids came in 1383, and by 1463 Bosnia was a Turkish province with Sarajevo as its capital. Hercegovina is named after Herceg (Duke) Stjepan Vukčić, who ruled the southern part of the present republic from his mountain-top castle at Blagaj (p117), near Mostar, until the Turks deposed him in 1482.

Ottoman & Austro-Hungarian Empires

Over the next 400 years Bosnia and Hercegovina was completely assimilated into the Ottoman Empire and became the boundary between the Islamic and Christian worlds.

The Islamicisation of Bosnia and Hercegovina largely took place in initial 150 years of Turkish rule. The general idea was that people converted voluntarily over a number of generations. Orthodox and Catholic Christians continued to practise their religions although under certain constraints.

As the influence of the Ottoman Empire declined in the 19th century, the Turks strengthened their hold on Bosnia and Hercegovina as a bulwark against attack. Sparked by the newly born idea of nationhood, the South Slavs (Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Bosniaks, Montenegrins and Macedonians) rose against their Turkish occupiers in 1875 and 1876.

In 1878 Russia inflicted a crushing defeat on Turkey in a war over Bulgaria, and it was decided at the Congress of Berlin in the same year that Austria-Hungary would occupy Bosnia and Hercegovina.

The Austro-Hungarians developed the country's infrastructure, building roads, railways and bridges. Coal mining and forestry became booming industries and agriculture was dragged, kicking and screaming, into the 20th century. Ivo Andrić's *Bridge over the Drina* describes this process of change as it took place in the town of Višegrad.

But political unrest was on the rise. Previously, Bosnian Muslims, Catholics and Orthodox Christians had differentiated themselves in terms of religion only, and identified with people of the same faith in other countries despite their nationality. But with the rise of nationalism in the mid-19th century, Bosnia's Catholic and Orthodox population started to identify with neighbouring Croatia or Serbia respectively. At the same time, resentment against foreign occupation intensified and young people across the sectarian divide began cooperating, working against the Austro-Hungarians, thus giving birth to the idea of 'Yugoslavism'. Assassination attempts became all the rage. On 28 June 1914 a young Bosnian Serb called Gavrilo Princip shot the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife in Sarajevo. One month later Austria declared war on Serbia. The rest, as they say, is history. Old WWI alliances are still alive in the Balkans today, with the Russians and French being seen as pro-Serb and the Austrians and Germans pro-Croat.

Unification, Communism & Political Tension

After WWI Bosnia and Hercegovina was absorbed into the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, with the Serbian King Alexander as its head of state. During this time the seeds were already being sown for the conflict that would claim the lives of many at the end of the 20th century: the dominant Serbs were keen centralists, while the Croats and Bosnian Muslims tried to preserve their separate identities within the new kingdom.

Over the next 10 years politics within the kingdom became riddled with strife. Frequent arguments peppered with insults and nonparliamentary behaviour interrupted political debate. It all culminated in 1929 when a Montenegrin deputy, annoyed by interruptions to his speech, pulled out a gun and shot several of his colleagues. Following this, King Alexander clamped down on political opposition. He also renamed the kingdom 'Yugoslavia'. No-one was happy with the new regime. With the support of fascist Italy, the Croats, under the leadership of Ante Pavelić's Ustaše movement, started plotting for Croatian independence. After Yugoslavia's capitulation to Germany in 1941, Bosnia and Hercegovina was annexed by the newly created fascist Croatian state. The Ustaše mimicked the Nazis in persecuting and murdering Croatia's and Bosnia's Jewish population, and added to this its own persecution of the Serbs.

The Serbs responded with two very different resistance movements. The first was the Četniks led by the royalist Draža Mihajlović; the second was the Communist Partisans headed by Josip Broz Tito. The two groups, supported by local peasants, managed to put up quite an effective resistance to the Germans, but long-term cooperation was impossible due to their very different ideologies and plans for the future of the country. In the meantime the fascist Croatian Ustaša started to attack Bosnia's Muslim population, while a separate group of Bosnian Muslims – loyal to the Nazis – began to commit atrocities against Bosnia's Serb population, with the aim of gaining some kind of autonomy for the country. By the end of the war it seemed that everyone was against everyone else, and the only movement that seemed to

offer a real alternative was the Communist Partisan party.

Post-WWII, Bosnia and Hercegovina was granted republic status within Tito's Yugoslavia. After Tito fell out with Stalin in 1954 and the country allied itself with Egypt and India to create the so-called 'nonaligned movement', constraints on religious practices were eased but the problem of nationality was ever present. Bosnia's Muslims had to declare themselves to be either Serbs or Croats until 1971, when 'Muslim' was declared to be a nationality unto itself.

During the 1960s Bosnia was one of the least developed republics of Yugoslavia (along with Kosovo) until it was given a much-needed boost when Sarajevo hosted the 1984 Winter Olympics.

Tito was in many ways the glue that held Yugoslavia together, and his death in 1980 exposed a corrupt and crumbling political system. By 1988 Yugoslavia's debt amounted to \$33 billion. These circumstances created a fertile breeding ground for nationalists and demagogues.

The infamous appearance in 1990 of a then relatively unknown politician, Slobodan Milošević, on a field outside Kosovo's capital, Prishtina, celebrating the 600th anniversary of the battle of Kosovo Polje, marked a new era. The battle had separated the southern Slavs, placing Serbs and Macedonians under Turkish rule. Roaring references to the times of the Ottoman occupation added fuel to the blaze of new-and-improved Serbian nationalism. The Croatian leader, Franjo Tuđman, called for Croatia's independence. Demands for a looser Yugoslav confederation fell on deaf ears in Milošević's government.

In 1990 and 1991 Slovenia and Croatia were each plunged into a war with the Serb-controlled Yugoslav People's Army. Nationalist sentiment quickly caught on in neighbouring Bosnia and Hercegovina. In the republic's first free elections in November 1990, the communists were easily defeated by nationalist parties. Bosnian Croats joined forces with the Muslims and on 15 October 1991 declared independence from Yugoslavia. Serb parliamentarians wanted none of this and withdrew to set up their own government at Pale, 20km east of Sarajevo. Bosnia and Hercegovina was recognised internationally and was admit-

ted to the UN, but internal talks between the parties broke down.

The 1990s Conflict

One day after Sarajevo came under siege by Serb paramilitaries, Bosnia was recognised as an independent state (6 April 1992) by the international community and entered the UN. Bosnian Serb forces began a campaign of brutal ethnic cleansing, expelling Muslims from northern and eastern Bosnia and Hercegovina to create a 300km corridor joining Serb ethnic areas in the west of Bosnia and Hercegovina with Serbia proper. This is what is now known as Republika Srpska (RS; Serb Republic), with Banja Luka as its administrative centre.

In western Hercegovina the local, predominantly Croat, population armed itself (with the help of neighbouring Croatia) and, joining forces with the territorial defence army of the Bosnian government, managed to successfully fight the Serbs in some areas. Out of this military cooperation a political cooperation between Bosnia and Croatia was born, and the Bosnian president (and leader of the Bosnian Muslims) Alija Izetbegović signed a formal military alliance with Franjo Tuđman in June 1992.

The West's reaction to the increasingly bloody war in Bosnia was confused and erratic. Pictures of concentration camp victims found in northern Bosnia in August 1992 finally brought home the extent to which Bosnian Muslims in particular were being mistreated.

In response to this the UN authorised the use of force to ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid, and 7500 UN troops were sent to Bosnia and Hercegovina. However, this UN Protection Force (Unprofor) was notoriously impotent. In early 1993 fighting broke out between Muslims and Croats, and the war acquired a 'second front'. The Croat expulsion of Muslims from Mostar's west bank to the east culminated in the destruction of Mostar's historic bridge in 1993 by Croat army forces.

In 1994 Western forces began to react to what was taking place in Bosnia and, even as fighting between Muslims and Croats intensified, NATO began to take action against the Bosnian Serbs. A Serbian mortar attack on a Sarajevo market in

February 1994 left 68 dead, and US fighters belatedly began enforcing the no-fly zone over Bosnia and Hercegovina by shooting down four Serb aircraft. When NATO air strikes aimed at protecting Bosnian 'safe areas' were finally authorised, the Serbs captured 300 Unprofor peacekeepers and chained them to potential targets to keep the planes away.

In July 1995 Unprofor's futility was highlighted when Bosnian Serbs, led by the infamous Ratko Mladić, attacked the 'safe area' of Srebrenica, slaughtering an estimated 7500 Muslim men as they fled through the forest.

The end of Bosnian Serb military dominance was near as European leaders loudly called for action. Croatia renewed its own internal offensive, expelling Serbs from the Krajina region of Croatia in August 1995. At least 150,000 of these moved to the Serb-held areas of northern Bosnia.

Following another Serb mortar attack on a market in Sarajevo which killed 37 and wounded 88 people, a swift shift took place in UN and NATO politics. An ultimatum was handed to Mladić to remove his forces from around Sarajevo. Naturally, he refused, but two weeks of NATO air strikes in September 1995 proved more persuasive. US president Bill Clinton's proposal for a peace conference in Dayton, Ohio, USA was accepted soon after.

The Dayton Agreement

The Dayton Agreement stipulated that the country would retain its prewar external boundaries, but would be composed of two parts, or 'entities'. The Federation of Bosnia & Hercegovina (the Muslim and Croat portion) would administer 51% of the country, which included Sarajevo; the RS was allotted 49%.

The agreement emphasised the rights of refugees (1.2 million abroad, and one million displaced within Bosnia and Hercegovina itself) to return to their prewar homes.

A NATO-led peace implementation force was established and named the Stabilisation Force (SFOR). Its current mandate has no definite time limit.

After Dayton

Threatened sanctions forced the wartime Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić to



step down from the RS presidency in July 1996. Biljana Plavšić, his successor, moved the RS capital to her own power-base of Banja Luka in January 1998.

A new, relatively liberal Bosnian Serb prime minister Milorad Dodik pushed several Dayton-compliant measures through the RS parliament, including common passports, a common licence plate and a new common currency called the convertible mark. Dodik lasted until November 2000, when he failed to be re-elected. Despite his efforts, reforms continue to stall and nationalism in RS is rife.

The Dayton Agreement also emphasised the powers of the Hague-based International Court of Justice and authorised NATO to arrest indicted war criminals. Minor, and a few major, players have been arrested (among them Biljana Plavšić) but the two most-wanted war criminals – Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić and his military henchman Ratko Mladić – remain at large at the time of writing. Several SFOR hunts for them have ended in embarrassing failure, and while High Prosecutor Carla Del Ponte made confident claims that they would be arrested during 2005, no progress has been made so far.

The presidency of the republic rotates between a Croat, a Bosniak (Muslim) and a Serb leader, but the current president, Adnan Terzić of the Muslim Party of Democratic Action (SDA), will be the first to serve a four-year mandate. The responsibilities of

the presidency lie largely in international affairs. In the 2002 elections voter turnout was low and nationalist parties continued to wield their influence. There is general dissatisfaction with the economic state of the country. Terzić has promised to improve socioeconomic conditions in Bosnia, which would help bring the country closer to EU integration.

Paddy Ashdown, former leader of the UK's Liberal Democrat party, stepped down as high representative of the international community in late 2005.

Bosnia and Hercegovina today remains divided along ethnic lines, but tensions have ebbed. More people are now crossing between the RS and the Federation and many refugees are returning home.

PEOPLE

According to the 1991 census, Bosnia and Hercegovina's prewar population stood at around 4.5 million. Today it is estimated at just fewer than four million. No subsequent census has been taken but massive population shifts have changed the size of many cities as ethnic groups from previously mixed populations have moved. The population of Banja Luka, for example, has grown by over 100,000 since the start of the war, as it absorbed many Croatian Serb refugees. Initially Sarajevo and Mostar shrank, although the former has been growing again.

Serbs, Croats and Bosnian Muslims are all Southern Slavs of the same ethnic stock. Physically they are indistinguishable. The prewar population was mixed and intermarriage was common in the cities, but the country's ethnic divisions have changed since the war. Ethnic cleansing has promoted homogeneity not only in rural but in urban areas too. The Croats are dominant in western and southern Hercegovina, Muslims in Sarajevo and central Bosnia and Hercegovina, and Serbs in the north and east (generally in RS).

Inhabitants are known as Bosnian Serbs, Bosnian Croats and Bosniaks.

Relations between the three groups are getting better, and many refugees are returning to their original homes, although just as many are selling up and settling permanently in their place of refuge. The periodic outbreaks of violence seen in the early

postwar years are now almost nonexistent, but politically there is little cooperation.

RELIGION

The division of Europe between Catholicism and Orthodox Christianity created a fault line straight through Bosnia and Hercegovina. The west fell under the aegis of Rome and became Roman Catholic while the east looked to Constantinople and the Orthodox Church.

In between was the Bosnian Church (see below), the nature of which has only begun to surface in the last decade.

At the end of the 15th century Spain and Portugal evicted its Jews. Many of these were offered a home by the Turks in Bosnia and Hercegovina, adding a fourth religion to the country.

Today, about 40% of the population is Muslim, 31% is Orthodox, 15% Roman Catholic, 4% Protestant and 10% other

THE BOSNIAN CHURCH

During communist times, historians connected the Bosnian Church with Bogumils, a heretical movement founded by a Bulgarian priest called Bogumil in the 10th century. Later on this theory was increasingly discarded, as differing evidence was discovered. The Bosnian Church followed the main Christian beliefs and rituals, such as holding the cross to be a sacred symbol, holding mass and reading psalms (all of which were refused by the Bogumils). The main element of the Bosnian Church is believed to have been monastic life. The monasteries also doubled as inns for guests and travellers. Entire families were permitted to join the monks and thus the division between monastic and ordinary life was blurred. The Bosnian Church monasteries had a strong hierarchical structure with the *djed* (literally 'grandfather') being at the top. Next followed the *starac* (elder) and the *strojnik* (steward). In its heyday the Bosnian Church had considerable power, but with the arrival of the Ottoman Turks many of its adherents converted to Islam, probably in a trade-off to retain civil privileges. The catacombs in Jajce (see p124) are an interesting and unique example of a Bosnian Church temple.

religions. Most Bosnian Serbs are Orthodox and most Bosnian Croats are Catholic.

Across Bosnia and Hercegovina, churches and mosques are being built (or rebuilt) at lightning speed. This is more symptomatic of strong nationalism than religious devotion, since most people are fairly secular.

ARTS

Sarajevo, in the old Yugoslavia, was the cultural capital of the federation, but the wars of the 1990s put an end to that as artists fled back to their home republics or emigrated. Consequently, the arts scene in the country has taken a massive blow from which it has yet to recover. Počitelj (p117) housed an artists' colony for years and some artists are starting to return.

Literature

Bosnia's best-known writer is Ivo Andrić (1892–1975), winner of the 1961 Nobel prize for literature. His novels *The Travnik Chronicles* and *Bridge over the Drina*, both written during WWII, are fictional histories dealing with the intermingling of Islamic, Catholic and Orthodox communities in the small Bosnian towns of Travnik and Višegrad.

Another important Bosnian writer is Meša Selimović (1910–82) whose novel *Death and The Dervish* is a melancholy account of life in Bosnia during the Ottomans and the relationship between man and God.

Going back in time a little, and requiring some Bosnian language skills, is one of Bosnia's literary gems, *Ljetopis* (Chronicle) by Mula Mustafa Bašeskija (1731–1809). Bašeskija wrote in a version of Turkish spoken by officials in Bosnia at the time, recording events of Sarajevo life over a period of 50 years, starting at the age of 25 and continuing until his death. It is an amazing amalgam of historical data, with weather conditions, diseases and bizarre events, as well as charming stories of local characters and unhappy love stories. Most space was dedicated to lists of the dead and the circumstances of their deaths. The author Meša Selimović used some of Bašeskija's episodes to set the background to his novel *The Fortress*.

Bosnia's most remarkable poet is Mak Dizdar (1917–71). Born in Stolac (p118) his best poetry was inspired by the Bosnian

medieval tombstones, *stećci*. Francis Jones, translator of other former Yugoslav poets, translated Dizdar's most important and linguistically demanding collection, *The Stone Sleeper*, into English.

Aleksandar Hemon is a contemporary Bosnian writer who lives in America and writes in English. He went to America on a visit in 1991 and stayed there when the war in his country broke out. His work has been acclaimed in the English-speaking world and his writing style, perhaps a little ambitiously, compared to Nabokov's. His witty and intelligent books *The Question of Bruno* and *Nowhere Man* both deal with the life of a Bosnian in America.

Two other contemporaries are Miljenko Jergović and Semezdin Mehmedinović whose brilliant collections of short stories in *Sarajevo Marlboro* and poems and essays in *Sarajevo Blues* deal with the subject of the Sarajevo siege.

A wartime journal often compared to Anne Frank's *Diary* is *Zlata's Diary*. Written by a young girl, Zlata Filipović, in 1993 Sarajevo, and published in France, the book quickly became an international bestseller. A theatre adaptation was staged in the UK in 2004.

Buybook publishing house and a number of other small publishers in Sarajevo are giving a voice to new Bosnian writers, who are increasingly starting to look away from the subject of war.

Cinema

Bosnia and Hercegovina has done well with film. Danis Tanović won an Oscar in 2002 for his film *No Man's Land*. The film portrays the relationship between two soldiers, one Muslim, one Serb, caught alone in the same trench while Sarajevo was under siege. Another well-respected Bosnian film about the siege is *The Perfect Circle* (1997), whose protagonist is a poet. The early films of Sarajevo-born Emir Kusturica, such as *When Father Was Away on Business* and *Do You Remember Dolly Bell?* deal with fraught family life in 1980s Bosnia and rank among the director's best.

Craft

Sarajevo and Mostar have many private galleries and Sarajevo has a first-class regional public gallery. The work of the artists who

stayed on during the war has obviously been influenced by their traumatic experiences.

The craft industry is well developed with artisans working in copper and brass to produce ornamental or practical items, and in gold and silver for jewellery. All these items can be found in the lanes of Kujundžiluk (p114) in Mostar, and Baščaršija (p98) in Sarajevo.

Music

Traditional Bosnian music is called *sevdah* and has been described as the 'Bosnian Blues.' Sung in a heart-wrenching vocal, the lyrics are always about unhappy love. Safet Isović is regarded as the king of traditional *sevdah*. A contemporary band called Mostar Sevdah Reunion is a collection of five musicians from Mostar, most of whom left the city during the war and who recently reunited and recorded several *sevdah* albums.

Pop and rock music has always been successful in Bosnia and Hercegovina, and the music industry is flourishing. Cheap folk albums are also produced at an amazing rate. Recently, hip-hop has taken hold in the country. The local Eminem is a singer called Edo Maačka who raps about wartime and postwar Bosnia.

Jazz is very popular in Bosnia and Hercegovina, particularly in Sarajevo, where live music jazz clubs and bars attract decent crowds. An interesting fusion of traditional Bosnian music and jazz is the Edin Bosnić Quartet's *Bosnian Suite*.

ENVIRONMENT

The Land

Bosnia and Hercegovina is a mountainous country of 51,129 sq km in the central Balkans. Only 8% of the land is below 150m and 30 mountain peaks rise between 1700m and 2386m. Just a toe of land connects it to the sea through Croatia.

The arid south gives way to a central mountainous core, which descends again to the green rolling hills of the north and flatlands of the northeast that form the southern tip of the Hungarian plain.

Limestone forms much of the uplands, creating distinctive scenery with light-grey craggy hills and caves. The rivers shine green and possess a clarity to them that's unusual elsewhere in Europe; they are also

part of the country's wealth given their potential for electricity generation. Most of them flow north into the Sava River; only the Neretva River cuts south from Jablanica through the Dinaric Alps to Ploče on the Adriatic Sea.

Wildlife

About half of the country, mostly the north, is covered in forest, with beech at lower altitude giving way to fir trees higher up. Wildlife lives mainly in these forests and includes rabbits, foxes, weasels, otters, wild sheep, ibex, deer, lynxes, eagles, hawks and vultures. At higher altitudes there are bears and wolves.

National Parks

There are two main national parks. Sutjeska still has remnants of a Unesco-protected primeval forest going back 20,000 years, while the Hutovo Blato wetlands are a prime sanctuary for migratory birds.

Environmental Issues

Mines and unexploded ordnance put much of the country around the former battle zones out of reach, but with local guides visits are quite feasible. These leftovers from war, the infrastructure damage, air pollution from metallurgical plants and rubbish disposal are significant environmental problems for Bosnia and Hercegovina.

FOOD & DRINK

Staples & Specialities

Bosnia's Turkish heritage is savoured in grilled meats such as *ćevapčići* (minced lamb or beef), *šnicla* (steak) or *kotleti* (rack of veal). Often accompanying this is a half-loaf of spongy *somun* bread.

Stews are popular, often cooked slowly over an open fire, with favourites such as *bosanski lonac* (Bosnian stew of cabbage and meat) or *dinstana teletina sa povrćem* (veal and vegetable stew).

Burek (stuffed filo pastry) sold in *pekara* (bakery shops) is a filling substitute for a missed breakfast and comes either filled with *sir* (cheese), *meso* (meat) or *krompiruša* (potato).

The ubiquitous pizza and pasta props up the national cuisine and fish is also readily available, especially trout from various fish farms on the nation's rivers.

For sugar-soaked desserts, try baklava or *tufahije* (an apple cake topped with walnuts and whipped cream). Many cities make good cheese; feta-like Travnik cheese is especially well known.

Fine wines from Hercegovina include Žilavka (white) and Blatina (red). These are best sampled in regional wineries; Medugorje has some fine offerings. A meal can always be washed down with a shot of *šljivovica* (plum brandy) or *loza* (grape brandy).

Where to Eat & Drink

In the larger towns and cities there are plenty of small cafés and restaurants offering mostly traditional Bosnian food. In Mostar's Old Town and Sarajevo's Baščaršija, every other establishment seems to be a place offering *ćevapčići*; you just have to follow your nose to find the nearest. Similar snack places can also be found around bus stations.

There are fewer restaurants in the ski resorts as the hotels capture their clients with half- and full-board accommodation.

Alcohol is readily available, even in Muslim areas, and there are enough bars to make a good pub crawl in Mostar, Banja Luka and Sarajevo.

Coffee is, however, the main social lubricant; people meet to sip their Bosnian coffee, smoke, play cards or just talk the world into some sort of order. The coffee is served in a *lđezva* (long-handled small brass pot), from which the precious black liquid is carefully decanted into *fildžan* (thimble-sized cups). Two lumps of sugar are usually added, or the lump is dipped into the coffee and nibbled. A piece of Turkish delight and a glass of water are also sometimes served with the coffee.

Vegetarians & Vegans

The emphasis on meat in the diet means that vegetarians and vegans are hard done by. Vegetarian restaurants are a rarity: only one restaurant in Sarajevo, the Karuzo (p105), offers a meatless menu. Many traditional and top-end restaurants will have several vegetarian dishes, although a vegan would have great trouble following a strict diet when eating out. Snacks for vegetarians are *sirnica* (cheese pie) or *zeljanica* (spinach pie), and for full-blown meals there are stewed beans or courgette dishes.

SARAJEVO

📍 033 / pop 602,500

Sarajevo is like a kid's pocket after a quick spree at the Woolworth's pick'n'mix counter: it's got bits of everything. Mosques (in abundance), churches (quite a few), an Ottoman bazaar area (only one), wide Austro-Hungarian streets and classy buildings (lots), and grey socialist blocks (yep). But most of all, Sarajevo has tons of character and a kicking spirit. Once famous for being 'Europe's Jerusalem', the place where the world's three main religions sent their prayers upwards in harmony, Sarajevo suffered immense physical and psychological damage during its three-year siege (1992–95). Its citizens went without food, water, electricity and heating for much of that time, but walking down the streets of this animated city now, you'd think it was all a bad dream. Here and there a pockmarked building and a city park graveyard remind of the war.

The Baščaršija bazaar is at the heart of the city, an ancient trading place with small shops, coffee-drinking dens and endless souvenir choices. Moving further away the Ottoman traces disappear and the city takes on its other guise, that of a nostalgic Austro-Hungarian bride left standing at the altar. Surrounding the city's mosques and churches are countless colourful restaurants, bars, cafés, museums and galleries, all testament to the various colonisers that left their heritage behind. The city is bisected by a tiny, feeble river, the banks of which teem with cafés and sun-seeking Sarajevans.

HISTORY

While the region had its attractions for those who populated prehistory, it wasn't until the Romans arrived that Sarajevo gained a significant mention on the pages of history. Their legions, always on the lookout for a new bathhouse, founded the settlement Aquae Sulphurae around the sulphur springs at Ilidža (p110).

Sarajevo then slipped back into obscurity until the Turks arrived in the mid-15th century and their governors set up house and stayed until 1878. The city became an important market and stopping place on the east-west trading routes. It was during this time that the city gained its name,

originating from the Arabic word *saray*, which means 'resting place'.

The 'on the go' Austro-Hungarians replaced the fading Ottoman Empire, bringing railways that connected Sarajevo and its outlook to the West. Sarajevo had street lighting before Vienna, as there were doubts about the safety of electricity and it was deemed wiser to try it out in the colonies first. WWI famously has its roots in Sarajevo, where a young Serb, Gavrilo Princip, shot Archduke Franz Ferdinand in protest against the Austro-Hungarian empire. This happened on the Latin Bridge, known as Princip's Bridge for many years, until in 1993 it was changed back to its pre-WWI name. Princip was then declared to be a terrorist and (allegedly) his famous footprints were removed from the spot where he is meant to have stood.

Seventy years after the assassination, in 1984, Sarajevo attracted world attention by hosting the 14th Winter Olympic Games. Then from 1992 to 1995 the infamous siege of the city grabbed the headlines and horrified the world. Ratko Mladić, the Bosnian Serb commander, is reported to have said, 'Shoot at slow intervals until I order you to stop. Shell them until they can't sleep, don't stop until they are on the edge of madness.'

Sarajevo's heritage of six centuries was pounded into rubble and its only access to the outside world was via an 800m tunnel under the airport. Over 10,500 Sarajevans died and 50,000 were wounded by Bosnian Serb sniper fire and shelling. The endless new graveyards near Koševo stadium (Map p97) are a silent record of those terrible years.

ORIENTATION

Sarajevo nestles in a wide valley created by the Miljacka River. The distant mountains of Jahorina and Bjelašnica, host to the 1984 Olympics, flank the city to the south.

STREET ADDRESSES

At the end of a number of addresses in this chapter, you'll notice the letters 'bb' instead of a street number. This shorthand, which stands for *bez broja* (without a number) is used by businesses and other non-residential institutions, indicating that it's an official place without a street number.

SARAJEVO IN TWO DAYS

The only way to start getting the hang of the city is by getting lost in the streets of **Baščaršija** (p98). Follow your nose to Sarajevo's best *čevapčići* at the legendary **Željo** (p106) and walk over the river to check out the **Sarajevo Brewery** (p107). Go partying at the **Bar** (p107), where you can have fun under the stars.

Have your breakfast at **Mash** (p106) and appreciate stuff at the **Art Gallery** (p99). Check out the churches and the synagogue and stroll to the **National Museum** (p101). Take a city tour and get ready for a night out starting at the **Zlatna Ribica** (p106), then finish with some smooth sounds at **Clou Jazz Club** (p107), Asian cool in the **Buddha Bar** (p107) or go back in time with old-style Sarajevo club **Sloga** (p107).

From the airport, 6.5km to the south-west, the main road runs up to the suburb of Ilidža, then swings east through Novo Sarajevo. In doing so it passes the yellow Holiday Inn, home to journalists during the war, and becomes the section of road that gained notoriety as 'sniper alley'. The bus and train stations are to the north. Near the town centre the road runs alongside the Miljacka River, before leaving it at Baščaršija, which occupies the east end of town.

If you take a taxi up to Sedrenik on the northeastern side you get a fine view of the city and mountains beyond.

INFORMATION

Bookshops

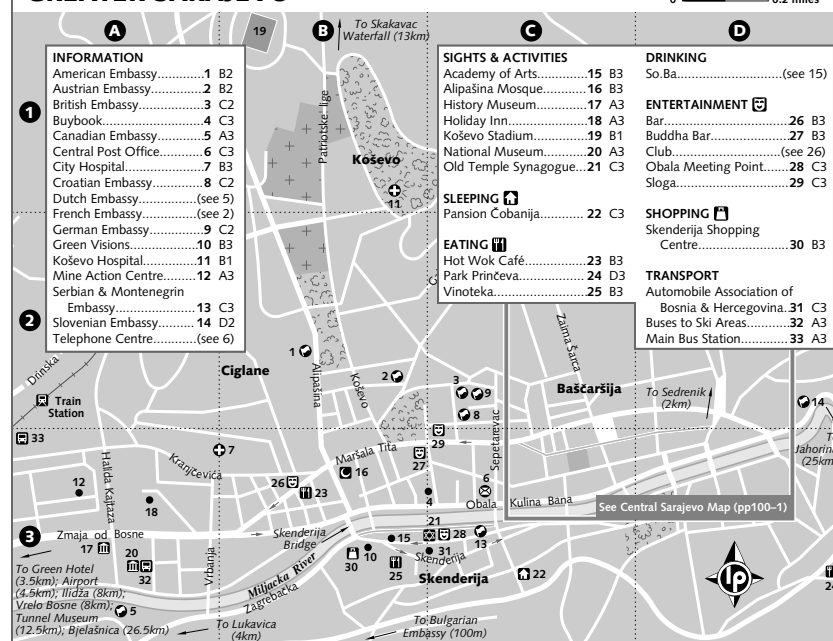
BuyBook (☎ 716 450; www.buybook.com.ba) Radićeva (Map p97; Radićeva 4; ☎ 9am-10pm Mon-Sat, 10am-6pm Sun); **Zelenih Beretki** (Map pp100-1; ☎ 712 000; Zelenih Beretki 8; ☎ 9am-10pm Mon-Sat) The Radićeva branch has books on the Balkans and a café. The Zelenih Beretki branch has art book specialists, English newspapers and magazines, and CDs at the Karabit Café (p107).

Šahinpašić (Map pp100-1; ☎ 220 111; www.btcsa.hinpasic.com; Mula Mustafe Bašeskije 1; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Sat, 10am-2pm Sun) English-language newspapers, magazines, maps and a stack of Lonely Planet guides.

Internet Access

Albatros (Map pp100-1; ☎ 555 483; Sagardžije 27; per hr 3KM; ☎ 9am-midnight)

GREATER SARAJEVO



Click (Map pp100-1; ☎ 236 914; Kundurdžiluk 1; per hr 3KM; ☎ 9am-11pm)

Left Luggage

Main bus station (Map p97; Put Života 8; for 3hr 1.50KM, each subsequent hr 0.50KM) Useful while you go into town to look for accommodation.

Media

Oslobođenje (a Sarajevo-based, privately owned daily) and **Dnevni avaz** (the main Muslim daily) are the most popular newspapers in Sarajevo; **Dani** (Sarajevo-based privately owned weekly) is a reliable independent weekly.

Medical Services

Ask your embassy for a list of private doctors. In an emergency, contact one of the following:

Baščaršija Pharmacy (Map pp100-1; ☎ 272 301; Obala Kulina Bana 40; ☎ 24hr)

City Hospital (State Hospital; Map p97; ☎ 291 100; Kranjčevića 12)

Koševo Hospital (Map p97; ☎ 445 522; Gradska Bolnička 25) Ask for the VIP service and take your passport.

Money

ATMs are sprinkled all over the city centre, accepting all varieties of debit cards.

Airport Money Exchange (airport; ☎ 11am-6pm Mon-Sat, noon-7pm Sun) The bureau has an all-card ATM, cashes travellers cheques, transfers money and will give cash advances on your credit card. A financial lifesaver when banks are closed on Sundays.

Turkish Ziraat Bank (Map pp100-1; ☎ 720 209; Ferhadija 10; ☎ 8.30am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat) Has an all-card ATM and cashes travellers cheques.

Post

Central post office (Map p97; ☎ 650 618; Obala Kulina Bana 8; ☎ 7am-8pm Mon-Sat) Queue at counter 17, which is for post; the others are only for paying bills. There's also a telephone centre here.

Telephone & Fax

Telephone centre (Map p97; ☎ 650 618; Obala Kulina Bana 8; ☎ 7am-8pm) At the central post office.

Tourist Information

Tourist Information Centre (Map pp100-1; ☎ 220 724, 532 606; www.sarajevo-tourism.com; Zelenih Beretki 22a; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat, 10am-2pm

Sun) A great place for books, maps and brochures, and informed answers on the city and the country.

Travel Agencies

Centrotrans (Map pp100-1; ☎ 205 481; ferhadija16@hotmail.com; Ferhadija 16; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Fri, 8am-2pm Sat) Books international bus tickets and is part of the Eurolines trans-Europe bus network.

Relax Tours (Map pp100-1; ☎ /fax 263 190; www.relaxtours.com; Zelenih Beretki 22; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat) Books airline tickets, ferry tickets and accommodation.

SIGHTS

Bašćarsija & Around

The mazy streets of Bašćarsija are perfect for getting to know Sarajevo's soul. Whatever you decide to buy in the souvenir shops, be it a Bosnia and Hercegovina football shirt or a coffee set, you'll no doubt get into conversation with one of the locals. Watching a craftsman at work can be a great experience, bargaining for some jewellery or a leather bag an even better one, especially if you have no Bosnian and your 'bargainer' no English. The great thing about Bašćarsija is that it's relaxed and whatever you do, you can take your time. And, no doubt, the locals will too.

The best place to start exploring is the grandiose Austro-Hungarian **National Library** (Map pp100-1; Obala Kulina Bana bb). This was the building where numerous historical documents, manuscripts and books were archived, all relating to the history of the country. Deliberately targeted by the Serbs for the very reason of being a 'centre' of culture, the library suffered heavy destruction. An incendiary shell fell on the building on 25 August 1992, 100 years after construction began, wiping out much of the country's heritage. Restoration work is slow and many books may be irreplaceable. The library is now graced by a glass-and-steel dome provided by the Austrian government, and every now and then it houses exhibitions and hosts talks.

Nearby is Bašćarsija's centre piece, the **Sebilj** (Map pp100-1), a fountain which sits in a small square, surrounded by a colony of pigeons (some even call the square 'Pigeon Square'). This Moorish-style fountain was modelled on a stone fountain in Constantinople (Istanbul). It dates back to 1891 and is the gathering place not only of pigeons

(although they are definitely in the majority) but of Sarajevans of all ages.

A little southeast of the Sebilj is the picturesque 16th-century **Bašćarsija mosque** (Map pp100-1; Bravadžiluk), where worshippers pray silently on the outside 'terrace'.

Down an alley accessed from Sarači (near number 73) is **Morića Han** (Map pp100-1). A tavern when Sarajevo was a stopover on the ancient crossroads between East and West, the *han* (an inn and place where merchants and travellers used to sleep) is now a courtyard with cafés and wicker chairs. In the right-hand corner is a carpet shop with plush Persian rugs piled a metre high. The *han* has burnt down a number of times over the years and this reincarnation dates from the 1970s.

Behind Morića Han is the old **Orthodox Church** (Map pp100-1; ☎ 534 783; Mula Mustafe Bašeskije 59), which predates the yellow-and-brown Orthodox Cathedral. Don't miss the **museum** (free admission) inside the church, which showcases Russian, Greek and local icons, tapestries and old manuscripts.

South of here is the **Gazi-Husrevbey Mosque** (Map pp100-1; ☎ 532 144; www.vakuf-gazi.ba; Veliki Mudželiti 21; ☎ 9am-noon, 2.30-4pm & 5.30-7pm). This is one of Sarajevo's most beautiful mosques, with a sunny front square and rows of shoes stacked outside belonging to the faithful. Designed by a Persian, Adžem Esir Ali, a leading architect at the time, the mosque was first built by masons from Dubrovnik in 1531 but has been reconstructed several times since. There's a free guide available between 2.30pm and 4pm. (Note that the mosque is on Sarači, but the address it provides is a little street off Sarači.) Women with headscarves and men with beards move to and fro across the street from the mosque to the **Gazi-Husrevbey madrasa** (Map pp100-1; Sarači), a Muslim place of learning since 1537.

The noisy life of one of Sarajevo's favourite streets can be seen on **Ferhadija**. Newspaper sellers shout the day's headlines, old men sell all sorts of books and magazines, and cake shops display their assets alluringly here.

Away from the mosques, the scenery changes from one of spiritual reverence to consumables-worship at Brusa Bezistan shopping centre (see p107). Unlike your typical shopping mall, this place has real history: the six-domed Bezistan was once

upon a time (from 1551) the top place for trading silk coming from Brusa in Asia Minor. Having traversed the Silk Road, the tired tradesmen would rest their feet and hope for profit under the domes, no doubt downing a coffee or two in the meantime.

If you turn right towards Bašeskija street from Ferhadija, you'll enter the **former Jewish quarter**. The Sephardic Jews, fleeing persecution by the Spanish Inquisition in Spain and Portugal, found refuge throughout the Ottoman Empire, and so too in Bosnia and Hercegovina. Also here is the **New Temple Gallery** (Novi Hram Gallery; Map pp100-1; ☎ 233 280; Mula Mustafe Bašeskije 38; admission free), which has interesting displays of historical documents relating to Bosnia and Hercegovina's Jews. Sarajevo's Jews were good tradesmen and blended easily into the city. They built their first place of worship, the **Old Temple Synagogue** (Stari Hram; Map p97; Skenderija), located across the river, in 1581, and this was expanded in 1821 as the community grew.

Back on Ferhadija street you will soon start to leave the Ottoman-style architecture behind and enter the remains of the Austro-Hungarian world. On your right as you walk west you'll see the 19th-century **Catholic Cathedral** (Map pp100-1; Trg Fra Grge Martića) with its neo-Gothic bellowers visible from almost any spot in town. Kids hang out on the cathedral's steps and the late Pope John Paul II served Mass here on his visit to the region in 1997.

Just north of the cathedral is the **Bosniak Institute** (Map pp100-1; ☎ 279 800; www.bosnjackiinstitut.org; Mula Mustafe Bašeskije 21; ☎ 10am-2pm Sat), a relatively new museum dedicated to the history of Bosnia's Muslim population. It has some interesting documents and books by leading Bosniak writers, and newspapers from the beginning of the last century expressing shock and dismay at the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand. Groups can request a free English-language tour.

South again on **Trg Oslobođenja** (Liberation Sq; Map pp100-1), you'll see old men playing chess with empty mortar cases for pieces, and shaking their heads in disbelief at their opponent's ridiculous moves.

Also on this square is the **Orthodox Cathedral** (Saborna Crkva; Map pp100-1; Trg Oslobođenja), the largest Orthodox church in the city. Built in 1872 in the Byzantine-Serb style, the church is open to visitors most of the (day) time.

A good place to pause is the **Art Gallery** (Map pp100-1; ☎ 266 550; Zelenih Beretki 8; admission 2KM; ☎ noon-2pm Tue-Sat), opposite the Orthodox Cathedral. The sprawling white building also houses the lovely café Karabit (p107), where you can check out the local arty crowd and drink a freshly squeezed juice. The gallery has a comprehensive range of the country's modern and contemporary art and is well worth a visit.

Where Ferhadija reaches its end and meets Maršala Tita street is the **Eternal flame** (Vječna vatra; Map pp100-1; cnr Ferhadija & Maršala Tita), a monument commemorating the victims of WWII.

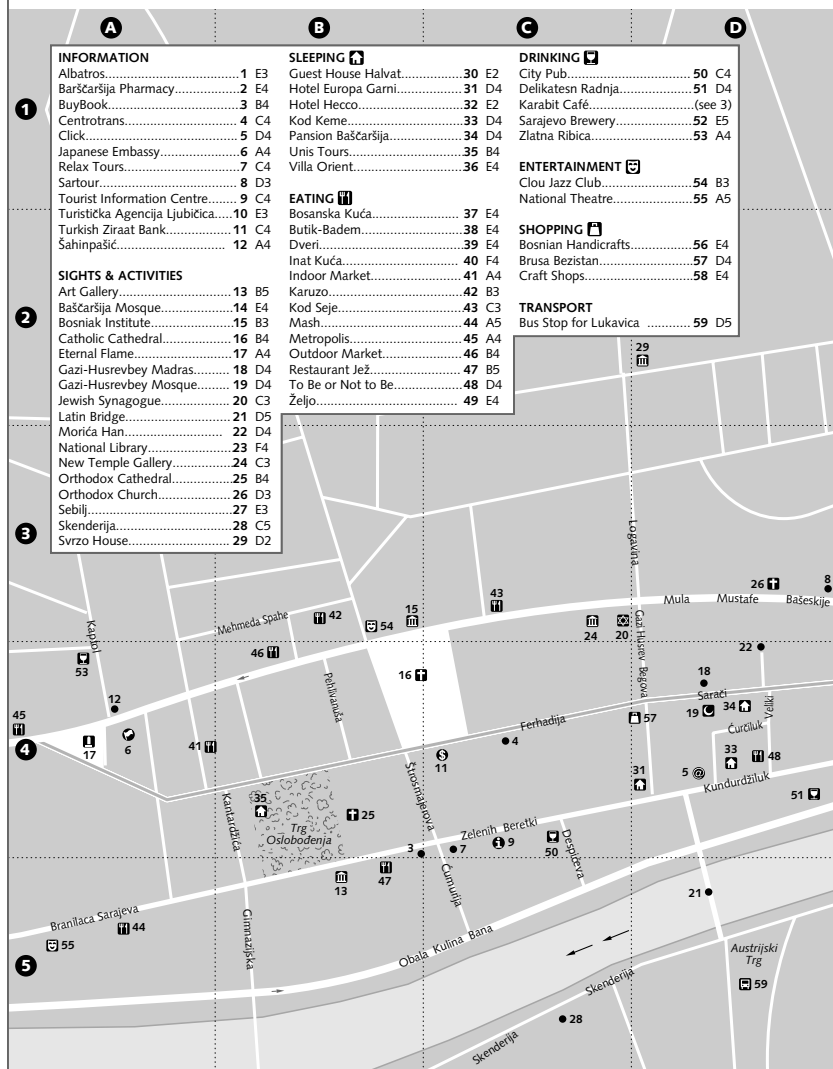
Walking down Maršala Tita you can do some window shopping or stop in one of the cake shops. A little further west, where Maršala Tita meets Alipašina is **Alipašina mosque** (Map p97; Maršala Tita), renowned for being a particularly dangerous sniper spot in the recent conflict. Behind the mosque is Skenderija bridge, named after the once grand 1984 Olympic structure **Skenderija** (Map p97; Skenderija). The concrete building, although not a pretty sight, is now a shopping centre and an important landmark in the city.

Walking east along the river after crossing Skenderija bridge, you'll come upon one of Sarajevo's loveliest buildings, the **Academy of Art** (Map p97; Obala Maka Dizdara). Once an evangelical church, this is now the gathering place of the city's arty crowd, with parties and beer drinking going on into the wee hours on the lawns outside. It is possible to go inside and have a coffee in the student bar.

On the other side of the river is the central post office (p97), a beautiful Austro-Hungarian structure, with an elegant and peaceful interior renovated after the war. Next to it is the equally scrumptious **National Theatre** (Map pp100-1; Zelenih Beretki), built in 1899 and designed by the same architect who created the Academy of Art building.

On the fateful day of 28 June 1914, Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie paused at the National Library (then the town hall) and then rode west along the riverside in an open car to the **Latin Bridge** (Map pp100-1), about 500m south of the National Theatre. It was here that Gavrilo Princip stepped forward to fire his pistol, killing both and sparking off

CENTRAL SARAJEVO



a war by the Austro-Hungarians against Serbia, which in turn, through a series of European alliances, led to WWI.

The elegant stone Latin Bridge has been repaired and the bit of pavement bearing Princip's footprints may now be replaced – it was removed during the recent war when Princip (a Bosnian Serb) was denounced

as a terrorist in 1993. There are also plans to place a bust of the archduke here, and to open a museum at the north side of the bridge.

If you go uphill across the river from the National Library, you'll come upon the **Alifakovac cemetery**, a place for great views of the city.



SARAJEVO ROSES

All around town, but particularly along Ferhadija, pay attention to **Sarajevo roses** on the pavements. These are skeletal handlike indentations of mortar shells and many are symbolically filled in with hard red paint, particularly those where the death toll was very high. Often you will see a series of brass plaques giving the names of those killed by that particular shell.

away, including the bedding. That's why the rooms may seem a little bare. There's a useful explanatory brochure in English.

Goat's Bridge

A considerable walk east along the Miljacka River from Baščaršija is **Goat's Bridge**, an elegant arch from where pilgrims to Mecca once began their long journey. It's an 8km walk from the city centre and good for spending the day away from the crowds, or for a decent bike ride.

Novo Sarajevo

The Zmaja od Bosne road, the stretch between the city and the airport, was infamously dubbed 'sniper alley' during the siege of Sarajevo. This was because Serb snipers, who were hiding in the surrounding hills, shot civilians like clay pigeons as they crossed the street on their way to try to get water or go to work.

The bright-yellow and brown **Holiday Inn** (Map p97; Zmaja Od Bosne 4; ☎ 288 000; holiday@bih.net.ba) was the wartime home to international journalists, as it was the city's only functioning hotel. The side facing Sniper's Alley was heavily damaged, but the hotel has since been given a facelift. An important landmark in the city, the Holiday Inn was dubbed 'egg-sunny-side-up' during the winter days when snow would cover up most of the façade, leaving only a few circles of yellow peeking out.

Across from the Holiday Inn is the **National Museum** (Map p97; ☎ 668 026; www.zemaljskimuzej.ba; Zmaja od Bosne 3; adult/concession 5/1KM; ☎ 10am-2pm Tue-Sun, to 7pm Wed in summer). An impressive Romanesque building, the museum is a good place to catch up on the country's history, and displays include items from the Neolithic era; Roman findings;

North of Baščaršija is **Svrzo House** (Map pp100-1; ☎ 535 264; Glodžina 8; admission 2KM; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sat, 10am-1pm Sun), a display of the lifestyle of a well-to-do, 18th-century Muslim family. The owners lived in the house until 1952, when it was passed over to the city as a museum. Turkish homemakers were a tidy lot and everything not in use was put

HOW TO GET MORE OUT OF A WAR: SARAJEVO SURVIVAL GUIDE

Written in Sarajevo, between April of 1992 and April of 1993, and distributed in trade paperback by Workman Press of New York, this manuscript is part of a multifold project by FAMA, an independent production company, triggered during the siege of Sarajevo.

Sarajevo Survival Guide is a chronicle, a part of a future archive which shows the city of Sarajevo not as a victim but as a place of experiment, where wit can still achieve victory over terror.

The Modern Sarajevo Male

He has accreditation [ID], weapons, a good car, and a complete uniform. The owner of a bullet-proof vest is regarded with respect. One who doesn't wear a uniform has an axe in his right hand for cutting down trees, and a series of [water] canisters on his left shoulder. His image would be complete with a mask against poison gas.

The Modern Sarajevo Female

She cuts wood, carries humanitarian aid, smaller canisters filled with water, does not visit a hairdresser nor a cosmetician. She is slim, and runs fast. Girls regularly visit the places where humanitarian aid is being distributed. They know the best aid-packages according to their numbers. They get up early to get water, visit cemeteries to collect wood, and greet new young refugees.

Water

Water shortages may last for days, or weeks. The reasons are always the same – no electricity, or an act of terror. Then the search starts...Those who carry water do so, depending on their strength and the number of canisters, several times a day, travelling several kilometres, waiting in a line for at least three hours. The lucky ones are those with bicycles, which are pushed rather than driven. The same with the owners of baby carriages and former market carriages. Anything that rolls will do, for everything is easier than carrying the water by hand.

One of the ways to find water is by using dowsing rods. Life, and your ability to survive, is very much about natural talents. In this case you pit your electromagnetic waves against those of the water. Gifted magicians are searching for water. Those more talented and skilful can even advise you how deep you should dig.

Sleeping

Sleeping is entirely conditioned by the arrival of water and electricity. If they appear at the same time, the shock is complete. The race against time starts – in order to use both in the best possible way. It doesn't matter that it is two or five o'clock in the morning. We cook, we wash, we clean, we take baths. Sometimes even a loaf of bread can be baked, the most wonderful gift.

Eating

By additions and with a lot of imagination, one USA lunch package can feed five people. Rice, macaroni and bread are often eaten together – otherwise it is difficult to survive. For one resident of Sarajevo, during the first seven months of war, you couldn't count more than six packages of humanitarian aid...In spring, summer and fall, all the leaves it was possible to find were used as ingredients – from parks, gardens, fields, and hills which were not [too] dangerous to visit. Combined with rice, and well seasoned, everything becomes edible. Each person in Sarajevo is very close to [being] an ideal macrobiotician, a real role-model for the health-conscious, diet-troubled West.

A war cookbook emerged spontaneously, as a survival bestseller. Recipes spread throughout the city very quickly. People are healthy, in spite of everything, for no-one eats animal fat any more, nor meat, nor cheese—meals are made without eggs, without milk, onions, meat, vegetables. We eat a precious mix of wild imagination.

(The entire *Sarajevo Survival Guide* is available in Sarajevo bookshops.)

Bosniak, Croat and Serb traditional wear; and the Jewish Haggadah – the holy codex brought here by Sephardic Jews. Some parts of the museum are still closed. The relaxing gardens behind the museum contain a botanical collection.

The adjacent **History Museum** (Map p97; ☎ 210 418; Zmaj od Bosne 5; admission 5KM; 🕒 9am-2pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat & Sun) adds more recent history, displaying old photographs of Bosnia and Hercegovina. The outstanding item is a room of harrowing exhibits from the 1990s war; many are personal belongings that bear some imprint of the siege.

Butmir

A tunnel was dug from the garage of a house during the war, and led to the suburb of Dobrinje. It took Sarajevans to the relative safety of the Igman mountain, which was not in the hands of the Serbian army. It was for many a lifeline to the outside world, and is considered to be an inanimate 'war hero'. Now the **Tunnel Museum** (☎ 628 591; Tuneli 1; admission 5KM; 🕒 9am-5pm winter, to 7pm summer), displays 25m of the original 800m that ran underground. You can take a look inside and imagine what it must have been like, and then see the video (mostly reconstruction, inside the museum house) of how the Sarajevans passed through the claustrophobic tunnel. Also displayed here are various bits of Bosnian Army memorabilia.

Most people you meet in Sarajevo will have probably gone through the tunnel at some point and could tell you a personal account of their experience (although some are, understandably, not so keen on talking about it). The museum is on the far (southwestern) side of the airport in the neighbourhood of Butmir and any taxi driver will take you there from the Ilidza tram terminal. The fare should come to around 5KM.

Koševo

Another powerful reminder of the severity of the Sarajevo siege is the new cemetery by the Koševo stadium, with a sea of white tombstones, all victims of the 1992–95 siege.

TOURS

The people to show you the wild side of Bosnia and Hercegovina are at **Green Visions**

(Map p97; ☎ 717 290; www.greenvisions.ba; Radnička bb; 🕒 9am-5pm Mon-Fri). An active and innovative ecotourism organisation that works in promoting and preserving the country's pristine upland environment, Green Visions runs hiking treks, mountain-biking and rafting events, as well as visits to traditional Bosnian villages. It takes zero risks with mines, and operates in places that were never areas of conflict. A great and safe way of getting to know the off-the-beaten-track parts of the country.

The Tourist Information Centre has a list of city tour guides; **Sartour** (Map pp100-1; ☎ 238 680, 061 800 263; www.sartour-hostel-sarajevo.ba; Mula Mustafe Bašeskije 63; 🕒 9am-7pm Nov-Apr, 7am-8pm May-Oct) and **Turistička Agencija Ljubičica** (Map pp100-1; ☎ 232 109, 061 131 813; www.hostelljubica.com; Mula Mustafe Bašeskije 65; 🕒 8am-10pm winter, 7am-11pm summer) also run city tours.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Sarajevo has some good festivals; the Tourist Information Centre has a monthly Programme of Cultural Events. Also check the **Sarajevo arts** (www.sarajevoarts.ba) website. Following is a selection of local festivals:

Bašćaršijske Noći (Bašćaršija Nights) Basically an excuse to put on and enjoy a whole range of international events covering dance, music and street theatre. It's in July.

Futura This annual festival of electronic music has been held in October; check with the Tourist Information Centre for future dates.

International Theatre Festival (MESS) October.

International Jazz Festival (www.jazzfest.ba) November.

Sarajevo Film Festival (www.sff.ba; Aug) The most notable festival in town. It presents new commercial releases and art-house movies. The atmosphere is always great.

SLEEPING

There are some good, comfortable and affordable sleeping options here. Numerous private rooms, cosy and affordable *pansions* (*pensions* or guesthouses) and expensive hotels all exist in this relatively small capital. The best choice is the *pansions*, with hosts who'll take you in like a long-lost family member. Accommodation agencies in Sarajevo are a flourishing business, especially with the growing influx of visitors to the city. Through them you can find private homes whose owners rent out rooms or apartments of varying sizes and quality. Some agencies also have their own

hostels. Always look before you 'buy', and make sure the agency gives you a receipt. Recommended agencies:

Relax Tours (Map pp100-1; ☎ /fax 263 190; www.relax-tours.com; Zelenih Beretki 22; r 50KM; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat) Books hotel rooms including ski hotels.
Unis Tours (Map pp100-1; ☎ 667 229; www.unis-tours.ba in Bosnian; Ferhadija 16; s/d 42/74KM; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat) Books central rooms and accepts Visa and MasterCard.

Budget

The helpful and hospitable 'would you like a coffee?' **Turistička Agencija Ljubičica** (Map pp100-1; ☎ 232 109, 061 131 813; www.hostelljubicica.com; Mula Mustafe Bašeskije 65; hostel r from €8-16, private r €6-20; ☎ 8am-10pm winter, 7am-11pm summer) has a nearby hostel or can arrange private rooms. By arrangement it collects from the airport or stations.

Pansion Baščaršija (Map pp100-1; ☎ 232 185; Veliki Ćurčiluk 41; s/d 60/100KM) You'll probably hear the owners playing the guitar and singing, metres before you get to the door of this small *pension*. Slap bang in the centre of Baščaršija, your hosts are a father and son who have been in the business for decades. The rooms have wood-laminate walls, comfortable beds and a cosy atmosphere, and you can tell your hosts care. Bathrooms are shared.

Kod Keme (Map pp100-1; ☎ 531 140; Mali Ćurčiluk 15; s/d from 50/70KM) A private house in a quiet backstreet just south of the Gazi-Husrevbey Mosque. The rooms are white and simply decorated and the 1st floor ones feel a bit like something out of a convent – but in a good way. The Bosnian-Aussie owner speaks excellent English.

Green Hotel (☎ 639 701; www.green.co.ba; Ustanička bb, Ilidža; s/d/tr 45/70.2/105KM) For those who work out, this tidy cheapie (4km from the city centre) comes with a free fully equipped gym and sauna. The tram terminus is a 150m jog away, then there's a 20-minute ride into Baščaršija – or you could run all the way.

Midrange

Pansion Ćobanija (Map p97; ☎ 441 749; fax 203 937; Ćobanija 29; s/d 80/120KM) If you get tired of sightseeing and partying, you can spend the evening relaxing on the sofas in this *pansion's* big lounge and watch a bit of telly. (But that's not what you're here for, get out and party.) The rooms are all different, light

THE AUTHOR'S CHOICE

Guest House Halvat (Map pp100-1; ☎ /fax 237 714; www.halvat.com.ba; Kasima Dobraće 5; s/d 89/119KM; ☎) A home away from home, this is what Balkan hospitality is all about. A family-run and superfriendly guesthouse where you'll get a good room, a tasty homemade breakfast, and an adorable Dalmatian dog that lounges around. It may also appeal to families (or those with particularly youthful looks) as children under 13 stay free. There are only four double rooms and one single (all with extra beds available), so book in advance.

and fresh. Consider 202 with its neo-Art Deco mirrored furniture.

Hotel Hecco (Map pp100-1; ☎ 273 730; Medresa 1; s/d/tr 70/100/140KM; ☎) A spanking new hotel that will leave you out of breath after the mighty walk uphill from the centre. It's designed in what seem like the colours and lines of Mondrian, with water features and even a miniature garden in the reception area. The rooms are fresh and clean and the staff friendly.

Top End

Villa Orient (Map pp100-1; ☎ 232 754; orient@bih.net.ba; Oprkanj 6; s/d 150/200KM; ☎) Running water is relaxingly audible outside this Ottoman building in the heart of Baščaršija. The reception area is flashy and adorned with paintings of one of Bosnia's best artists, Mersad Berber, but the rooms feel a little 'deflated' and their sparkle a tad faded. There's a free fitness centre, Internet (3KM per hour) and a coffee bar open until midnight, with a lovely garden. Oprkanj is a tiny street off Telali.

Hotel Europa Garni (Map pp100-1; ☎ 232 855; www.europa-garni.ba; Vladislava Skarića 3; s/d 183/286KM; ☎) Fantastic views of Baščaršija's profile from the hotel terrace (and some rooms). The rooms are spacious and, if you're driving, the private parking is useful and that may well tip the balance in this hotel's favour. Once an extension of the 'real' Hotel Europa which is now a war ruin, this place has some modern adaptations including wheelchair access.

EATING

The eating-out scene is well established in Sarajevo. At the snack or quick-lunch

THE AUTHOR'S CHOICE

Inat Kuća (Spite House; Map pp100-1; ☎ 447 867; Velika Alifakovac 1; meals 7-10KM) This is one of the loveliest places in Sarajevo, not only because the food is great, but because it's in a gorgeous wooden Ottoman house. The story goes that the restaurant was once on the other side of the river but when the authorities wanted to demolish it during construction of the town hall, the owner insisted it be rebuilt here – piece by piece. Hence the name, Spite House. This is the ideal spot to try *sarma* (pickled cabbage leaves stuffed with minced meat) and *Begova čorba* (Bey's soup). In warm weather the riverside terrace is the spot for a bit of afternoon relaxation and reading.

level there are *čevabdžinicas* (places selling *čevapčići*) and *buregdžinicas* (places selling *burek*); some of the fancy expensive ones are no better than the hole-in-the-wall variety. A bit more upmarket, and aimed at the tourist, are a string of restaurants offering Bosnian cuisine with a little more variety. The top-notch restaurants attract the international clients (there are a lot of them) with international cuisines. The majority of eateries are in the centre, in Baščaršija, and up from the river on the south side.

Restaurants are open from 8am to 11pm unless otherwise mentioned.

Restaurants

Hot Wok Café (Map p97; ☎ 203 322; Maršala Tita 12; www.hotwokcafe.com; meals 10-15KM; ☎ 8am-midnight) The only Thai restaurant in town, and it's a good one at that. The small space is draped in modern Asian furnishings in the style of the once-ultrafashionable Buddha Bar décor, the Thai chef prepares food in an open-plan kitchen, tables and chairs are high and the food delicious. Whoever wrote the menu was a real comedian – names for dishes with puns on the word 'wok' are endless with sizzlers like 'Moonwoker' and 'Prawn Net Wok' (and the bizarre, and wok-less, 'Noodles Eat Your Heart Out'). There's also a good choice of cocktails.

To Be or Not to Be (Map pp100-1; ☎ 233 205; Ćizmeđiluk 5; meals 4-8KM; ☎ 11am-11pm) A tiny place decorated in traditional Bosnian style with wooden stairs leading to another tiny

room, here there are grills, generous salads and tangy seafood dishes to be consumed. The name actually has the 'Not to Be' bit crossed out, dating back to the war years when, according to the owners, not surviving was not an option. Ćizmeđiluk is a small street off Ćurčiluk Veliki.

Dveri (Map pp100-1; ☎ 537 020; Prote Baković bb; meals 5-12KM; ☎ 11am-4pm & 7-11pm; ☎) A small, small restaurant, so hidden you might never find it. But if you do, it's well worth eating in what looks like someone's kitchen laid out to expect family guests. Watch your food being prepared from a bench and inhale the pungent smells of garlic and chillies which, incidentally, also hang all around you. The speciality is Macedonian polenta, a wedge of polenta flavoured with garlic and cream and speckled with ham. Yum.

Bosanska Kuća (Map pp100-1; ☎ 237 320; Bravadžiluk 3; meals 6-9KM; ☎ 24hr) 'Come eat,' says the waiter in national costume, inviting you into a restaurant promoting Bosnian tradition in food and setting. This snappy joint makes choosing easier with its colour-picture menu – maybe a kebab, some grilled fish, or stuffed peppers or aubergines for vegetarians.

Metropolis (Map pp100-1; ☎ 203 315; Maršala Tita 21; meals 7-15KM; ☎ 8am-midnight) Peach walls, little round tables, soft music and plenty of chatter. This restaurant and a café (no alcohol) is a very popular spot with the locals. The menu is mainly pasta based and you can choose to have spaghetti, linguini, penne or macaroni with your sauce of choice. Great cakes too.

Park Prinčeva (Map p97; ☎ 222 708; Iza Hidra 7; meals 7-15KM; ☎ 9am-late) The restaurant for a romantic liaison: tables overlook the twinkling lights of Sarajevo way down below, velvet music tinkles from the keys of the white piano, and there's *Begova čorba* (Bey's soup; a Bosnian aphrodisiac) on the menu. During the day the restaurant has the best views of the town from its terrace.

Karuzo (Map pp100-1; ☎ 444 467; Mehmeda Spahe bb; meals 6-18KM; ☎ noon-3pm & 6-11pm Mon-Fri, 6-11pm Sat) It's a rare thing in this country, a meatless menu in a restaurant, not to mention a sushi menu. But here you have it. The place is tiny and only 18 can sit together at one time. It's a good idea to book, as it's popular. The owner takes a personal interest in your order and cooks it himself.

Vinoteka (Map p97; ☎ 214 996; Skenderija 12; meals 14-20KM; ☎ 11am-3pm & 7-11pm, bar to 1am) A rather upmarket two-floor restaurant and wine bar that specialises in various European cooking schools. This is where the expats come to lunch and dine, as do important people and businesspeople. The menu changes weekly, uses only fresh ingredients and is not too pricey if you want to treat yourself.

Restaurant Jež (Map pp100-1; ☎ 650 312; Zelenih Beretki 14; meals 16-20KM; ☎ 5pm-late) The name means 'hedgehog', which doesn't feature on the menu of this swish underground restaurant. The entrance is down an alley opposite the Orthodox Cathedral. Go past the old BMW motorcycle, down the stairs, through the antiques arcade, and you're there. The cuisine is typical Bosnian tinged with international extras and the warm seafood salad is worth a try. While you're waiting count the grandmother clocks on the wall. Do they all chime together?

Mash (Map pp100-1; ☎ 308 616; Branilaca Sarajeva; meals 3-14KM; ☎ 7.30am-1am Mon-Thu, to 3am Fri, 9am-3am Sat, 10am-midnight Sun) On the first floor of an unimpressive looking building, the interior of this fashionable bar is a cool place for a proper breakfast. Sandwiches, snacks and a few veggie dishes (such as veg fajitas) are good to get your stomach out of the nauseous pits of another-late-night.

Quick Eats

Even fast food is enjoyed slowly and quietly in Sarajevo. *Burek* stuffed with meat, cheese, potato or spinach is scoffed sitting down in a *buregdžinica*, accompanied by a fridge-cold yogurt, and the *čevapi* (small, rolled pieces of spiced, minced lamb meat) are gobbled in a *čevabdžinica* or on a park bench. Even though there are more quick-eat joints than you can ever sample (not that you'd want to) the following two are city legends.

Željo (Map pp100-1; Bravadžiluk bb; meals 6-8KM) For the best *čevapčići*, come here. This place is about as famous as Baščaršija itself, and many will say that you haven't been to Sarajevo till you've eaten here. And it's true. The *čevapčići* are succulent, the *lepinja* bread divine, and for an extra boost, try adding fresh onions to the combination. You might not have any friends later, though.

Kod Seje (Map pp100-1; Mula Mustafe Bašeskije bb; ☎ 8am-10pm; meals 3-5KM) Just behind the

cathedral, the place itself is as basic as it gets, but the *burek* is prepared *ispod saća*, which means that it's baked under hot coals, in a covered tray. You can see the method as you wait. Combine it with a cool yogurt for the ultimate Bosnian fast-food experience.

Butik-Badem (Map pp100-1; ☎ 533 135; Abadžiluk 12) This health-food shop, just downhill from the cobbled square in Baščaršija, has alternative snacks, from yummy chocolate-coated pistachios to fruit bars and nuts.

Self-Catering

Markale market (Map pp100-1; Mula Mustafe Bašeskije; ☎ 7am-5pm Mon-Sat, to 2pm Sun) This market, behind the cathedral, overflows with fruit and vegetables.

Town market (Map pp100-1; ☎ 7am-5pm Mon-Sat, to 2pm Sun) This small market off Ferhadija mostly sells fresh dairy products and eggs.

DRINKING

Drinking places turn over rapidly in this city: go away for a few months and there'll be somewhere new and the favourite of last month will have closed. As in most of the Balkans, the line that divides the café from the bar is thin.

Mash (left) is a quiet daytime kitten that turns into a party animal at night, and Sarajevo's youth gets mashed, dancing the night away. It's also a good place for breakfast.

So.Ba (Map p97; ☎ 210 369; Obala Maka Dizdara 3; ☎ 9am-10pm Mon-Sat, noon-10pm Sun) Inside the Academy of Arts, with thick smoke, pumping music and lots of art students getting into the party mood. There is an Internet café upstairs.

Zlatna Ribica (Map pp100-1; ☎ 215 369; Kaptol 5; ☎ 9am-late) A quiet place to start the evening, or just enjoy a drink. You will certainly be entertained by the décor in this bar: sewing machine parts, baroque bric-a-brac, *fin-de-siècle* Paris and Vienna, and perhaps a little Art Deco get on smashingly on the walls. The lighting is warm, and there are newspapers in English for the passing tourist. Drinks come with a side plate of complimentary nuts, dried figs or, if you're having a coffee, a biscuit, and the *rakija* (brandy) glass has a little glass cap.

City Pub (Map pp100-1; ☎ 299 916; Despičeva bb; meals 6-9KM; ☎ 8am-late) A daytime café-bar, with Lebanese and Mexican taste ticklers. At night it's a big music and drinking venue

with local bands playing blues, jazz or rock most nights. This pub swings, even the bouncers smile.

Karabit Café (Map pp100-1; ☎ 712 010; Zelenih Beretki 8; ☎ 9am-10pm Mon-Sat, 10am-6pm Sun) If you want to see Sarajevo's creative crowd, this is the place to be, and if not, it's still a great place to be. An airy space, freshly squeezed juices and a huge choice of teas; bring (or buy) a book and relax.

BuyBook (Map pp100-1; ☎ 206 545; Radičeva 4; ☎ 9am-10pm Mon-Sat, 10am-6pm Sun) Part of a great bookshop (see p96), where you can find titles in English and enjoy a good coffee and a good read.

Sarajevo Brewery (Map pp100-1; ☎ 445 430; Trg Heroja 35; meals 8-18KM; ☎ noon-late) Above the river on the south bank stands a large red-and-cream edifice with copper drainpipes that is Sarajevo's famous brewery. Now part of it has been converted into a cavernous bar, all dark stained wood and brass railings. It serves standard Sarajevo beer plus a pleasant dark beer with a caramel aftertaste. When you've had too much (liquid), ride the brass-doored lifts downstairs to the loo.

Delikatessna Radnja (Delicatessen Shop; Map pp100-1; Obala Kulina Bana 10; ☎ 8am-midnight Mon-Sat, 10.30am-midnight Sun) A lively bar on the river bank and a sunny spot during the day, great for relaxing and chatting on the cushioned benches in the front.

ENTERTAINMENT

Check and ask about other jazz clubs around town, they are forever opening and closing.

Nightclubs

Buddha Bar (Map p97; Radičeva bb; ☎ 9pm-late) Three rooms that strive to be a (much) smaller sister to its Parisian counterpart, the décor here is all bamboo and Buddha. The music is good, the atmosphere relaxed and dancing and drinking go on until the wee hours of the morning.

Bar (Map p97; Maršala Tita 7; ☎ 7am-3am) A laid-back club with camouflage and white deck chairs and bolsters under the trees, tropical-lounge style. There is dancing inside and parties on weekends.

Club (Map p97; ☎ 550 550; Maršala Tita 7; ☎ 10am-late) Just around the corner from Bar, inside the large building on the corner of Maršala Tita and Alipašina streets. Inside, take the

first door on the left and then go down the stairs. A 'C' wearing a bowler hat hanging on the building corner is a good indicator of the club's slightly secretive whereabouts. There is DJ music or local bands grooving away in this basement club. There are pizzas (12KM to 25KM) in the restaurant out the back, too.

Sloga (Map p97; Mehmeda Spahe 20; ☎ 6pm-late) If you want to see Sarajevo nightlife pre-1992, this is the place. The three floors cover everything from folky and unplugged sounds to concert space and old Yugo songs that make the punters jump up and down. Drinks are cheap and the atmosphere great – it's one of the city's favourites.

Clou Jazz Club (Map pp100-1; ☎ 061 203 984; Mula Mustafe Bašeskije 5; ☎ 11pm-late) A tiny jazz joint, located in a spooky building that seems like the wrong place for jazz. But fear not and tread bravely down the stairs into the smoky rooms where you can hear local bands plucking, beating, blowing and strumming some good tunes.

Cinemas

Oslobođenje, Sarajevo's daily paper, has daily cinema listings in the 'Kina' column.

Obala Meeting Point (Map p97; ☎ 668 186; Hamdije Kreševljakovića 13; admission from 3KM) Most cinemas show subtitled American blockbusters; this cinema in Skenderija is extra comfortable.

Theatre

National Theatre (Map p97; ☎ 663 647; Obala Kulina Bana 9) This theatre puts on concerts, ballet and plays.

SHOPPING

Baščaršija is the place for souvenirs, especially the craft shops (Map pp100-1) on Bravadžiluk. Check out the special 'war souvenirs' or ashtrays, pens and plant pots made out of mortar cases, empty bullets, etc. There are the more conventional copper coffee sets, jewellery or Oriental shoes, slippers and rugs. Be adventurous and bargain.

Don't miss the *Survival Map* (15KM), a cartoonlike map of wartime Sarajevo, available in bookshops, also produced by FAMA, the group responsible for the *Sarajevo Survival Guide* (see p102).

Brusa Bežistan (Map pp100-1; cnr Ferhadija & Gazi Husrevbegova) This certainly does not look like

your typical shopping centre (nor does it hide an IKEA inside) but it's a gorgeous place packed with shops selling clothes, fake designer shades, handiwork, souvenirs and other necessities.

Bosnian Handicrafts (Map pp100-1; in Tuzla ☎ 035-282 554; www.bosnianhandicrafts.com; Ćulhan 1; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-7pm Sat, 10am-4pm Sun) Contribute to a good cause by getting yourself a pair of knitted mitts or slippers from this nonprofit organisation that works with refugees. Located in Baščaršija.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Air

Sarajevo's international airport (☎ 234 841, 289 200; Kurta Šorka 34) is about 6.5km southwest of the town centre. For connections via Sarajevo airport see p132.

Bus

Courtesy of the country's political division, Sarajevo is blessed with two bus stations. Buses to Banja Luka go from both.

Bus schedules do change but the Tourist Information Centre always has an up-to-date schedule.

MAIN BUS STATION

Services from this station (Map p97; ☎ 213 100; Put Života 8) serve all places outside the RS as well as Banja Luka.

Frequent buses go to Mostar (one way 9KM, 2½ hours), three to Bihać (27KM, 6½ hours) and two to Banja Luka (23KM, five hours).

For Croatia, three buses run to Zagreb (€30, eight hours), four to Split (€30, eight hours) and one to Dubrovnik (€30, seven hours, 7.15am).

LUKAVICA BUS STATION

This station (☎ 057-677 377; Lukavica village) has six buses to Belgrade (20KM, eight hours), four to Podgorica (€10, eight hours) and hourly buses to Banja Luka (18.50KM, five hours).

For the Lukavica terminus take trolleybus 103 from Trg Austrijski (Map pp100-1) to the last stop and walk 150m.

Train

Services from the train station (Map p97; ☎ 655 330; Put Života 2) run to Mostar (9KM, three hours, departs 6.20am and 7pm) and Banja Luka (21KM, five hours, departs 10.30am) with international services to Zagreb and Budapest (see p133).

GETTING AROUND To/From the Airport

A taxi (15KM) is the easiest way to get into town from the airport. A cheaper alternative is to take the taxi to Ilidža (5KM) and transfer to tram No 3 (1.20KM) for Baščaršija.

Car & Motorcycle

Much of Baščaršija is pedestrian and the rest is narrow, making parking either illegal or impossible. The best option is to park to the west and use the tram.

THE ADVANTAGES OF TRAINS

Travellers going to Sarajevo from Mostar should consider the twice-daily train that originates at Ploče on the coast. The best train, involving an early start, leaves the neglected station in Mostar at 7.20am.

Don't expect a big train, maybe a loco and two carriages; you'll probably get a compartment to yourself. There is a buffet service, of sorts, including a range of spirits (which at that hour might be just a tad premature) and coffee.

This is a formidable journey (for the train that is). The first part involves puffing and panting alongside the pea green Neretva River, which, nicely situated in a gorge, has been dammed for electricity. If you ate trout in Mostar, as likely as not it came from one of the fish farms here. Leaving the gorge the train executes a massive U-turn and goes through a series of loops, switchbacks, tunnels and viaducts as it climbs slowly over the Bjelašnica Mountains to Sarajevo.

Another useful train where poor patronage works to the traveller's advantage is the overnight Banja Luka to Belgrade service. It's marginally cheaper than the bus, and takes longer. But which would you prefer? To arrive in Belgrade in the early hours in a cramped bus seat or to travel by train in your own compartment with seating that allows you to stretch right out?

Car-hire agencies at the airport include **Budget** (☎ 427 670), **Hertz** (☎ 235 050), **Avis** (☎ 463 598), **Europcar** (☎ 289 273) and **National** (☎ 893 500). Prices start from about €40 a day, less for longer periods.

Public Transport

An efficient tram network runs east-west between Baščaršija and Ilidža. Tram No 4 from Baščaršija peels off at the main bus station; tram No 1 goes between the main bus station and Ilidža. Buy tickets at kiosks near tram stations (1.20KM; 1.50KM if you buy them from the driver). You can get a daily pass for 5KM from a kiosk. Punch your ticket on board, as there are inspectors about. Bus and trolleybus tickets work the same way.

Taxi

All of Sarajevo's taxis have meters that begin at 2KM and cost about 1KM per kilometre. Call **Radio Taxi** (☎ 1515) or **Yellow Taxi Cab** (☎ 1516).

AROUND SARAJEVO

You can imagine that, as it was chosen to host the Winter Olympics all those years ago, Sarajevo's mountains are as smooth as a ball of ice cream and as varied as Ben & Jerry's flavours. Now, that doesn't mean that you should go up there and start eating snow – but you should head up for a taste of the skiing. Sarajevans are crazy about their skiing, and hotels and *pansions* near ski areas are usually packed. They only accept guests staying for a whole week; the changeover day is Saturday. All accommodation offers a choice of B&B, half or full board; due to this and the effects of the war, restaurants are rather limited, although in season there'll be the ubiquitous *čevapčići* stands. Many go up for a day's skiing, too.

Other places of interest around Sarajevo are the 100m-tall **Skakavac Waterfalls** located 20 minutes north of the city, and the **Bijambara Caves** near the town of Olovo (around 30 minutes northeast of Sarajevo). The five caves can be seen on guided tours and are believed to be just the beginning of what remains to be discovered inside the mountain. For both of these you will need your own transport unless you join an organised tour through one of the tourist agencies in Sarajevo.

Jahorina

☎ 057

Slightly old-fashioned thanks to there having been no large-scale development here, Jahorina is a gorgeous, simple resort, perfect for relaxing winter sports. The slopes are nearly deserted, and with 20km of runs for alpine and Nordic skiing, you'll feel like the king (or queen) of the hill. Jahorina is in RS, 25km southeast of Sarajevo. The winter season is mid-December to the end of March. Note that all prices could be lower if you are staying for over a week, or if you are in a group.

SLEEPING & EATING

Pansion Sport (☎ 270 333; granzov@paleol.net; r per person 25-55KM; (P)) For those who'd rather be in the Swiss Alps, this is a pleasant Swiss chalet-style guesthouse. It's got a prime position at the base of the ski runs. Rates are dependent on the season and in summer the place is only open on Saturdays and Sundays. Ski-equipment hire is a possibility in the winter.

Hotel Košuta (☎ 270 401; fax 270 400; per person Dec-Feb half board 33-75KM, per person Mar-Nov B&B/half board/full board 30/33/38KM; (P)) Perfect for skiing as the hotel is just 50m from the ski lift – jump right in there. Košuta is a big, made-for-the-Olympics hotel, some rooms have balconies and the ones at the back have fabulous views.

Hotel Dva Javora (☎ 270 481; fax 270 480; s/d/tr 70/90/105KM, breakfast/half board/full board extra 5/10/20KM; (P)) This is a brand-new exercise in light-coloured wood and blue furnishings that's open all year. It's very cosy and friendly, in complete contrast to the large impersonal hotels.

Hotel Kristal (☎ 270 430; www.kristal-jahorina.com; winter s/d B&B 75/130, half board 65/150, full board 95/170KM; (P) ☎) An enlarged mountain-hut of a hotel, the rooms here are comfortable, although not spacious. It is open in summer, when you can bargain those winter prices down. It can be booked out for winter by August.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

There is no public transport for Jahorina and you will need your own wheels, with chains on them during the winter months. The drive could take up to an hour in heavy snow, but the views are beautiful from the road.

WARNING

Stay on the groomed ski runs as there are mines in the vicinity of both resorts.

Bjelašnica

☎ 033

This is a more compact area than Jahorina and is within the Federation of Bosnia & Hercegovina. There's only one hotel, but fortunately it's only a few minutes from the skiing action.

Named after old Maršal Tito, the well-equipped **Hotel Maršal** (☎ 279 100; www.hotel-maršal.ba; rsummerB&B/half board/full board 65/75/85KM, winter 85/95/105KM; ☑) has several storeys and commands views over the nearby ski slopes. It will take guests for less than seven days in winter but slaps on a surcharge. Added attractions include a disco with bands in the winter season, excursions to traditional Bosnian villages and transport to Igman, a small nearby skiing field with a lift and ski jump.

There are no buses from central Sarajevo, but there is a minibus from Ilidža that travels to Bjelašnica two times a day (2KM). Ask at the Tourist Information Centre for the times of departure.

Ilidža

This is one of Sarajevo's favourite weekend getaway locations. While its appeal is now limited to the modern man, Ilidža was appealing even in Neolithic times. Evidence of life dating back to 2400 BC to the so-called 'Butmir settlement' has been found here. The Romans, drawn by its healing spas, made this a permanent settlement. The remains of the Roman settlements are near the source of the Bosna River, commonly known as **Vrelo Bosne**. The lush park and wide *aleja* (alley) where Sarajevans jog, stroll or cycle is a beautiful and relaxing area. Get to Ilidža by taking tram 1 from Sarajevo and getting off at the last stop.

HERCEGOVINA

Hercegovina is the country's silent partner, the part that no-one in the West ever mentions, because they can't pronounce it (if you'd like to attempt it, it's *Her-tze-goh-*

vina). But when people say 'Bosnia', what they really mean is Bosnia and Hercegovina, and if the talk is of an arid, Mediterranean landscape, then it's the latter they are talking about. The region is distinct and beautiful, with summers so hot that the fruits of the pomegranate and fig trees sag down towards the parched earth. It is famed for its fine wine, delicious food, fast-flowing rivers, and beautiful towns and cities. Plus the Adriatic coast is only an hour's drive away.

MOSTAR

☎ 036 / pop 94,000

One of the things that most people know about Bosnia and Hercegovina is 'the Old Bridge in Mostar'. And so it's impossible to write an introduction to the city without plunging for the image of the World Heritage-listed stone bridge for inspiration. Before its destruction, and over the bridge's 500-year life, people from the four corners of the earth came to see its beauty; after its destruction curious visitors came to see the fact that it wasn't there any more, and now with the rebuilding of the 'new Old Bridge' in 2004, the magnetic pull of the structure is again gaining strength. And no wonder. Visiting Mostar and seeing the Old Bridge once again span the emerald Neretva River is a great experience.

On each side of the bridge is Mostar's Old Town, a cobbled Ottoman quarter that cradles the city's craftsmen and artists and that has itself had a bit of a face-lift. There are beautiful 16th-century mosques, interesting museums and endless cafés here. The restaurant terraces, dotted on the steep rocky riverbanks, have perfect views of the Old Bridge at sunset and the green rapids of the beautiful Neretva. Stretching further out are old, unchanged neighbourhoods that show Mostar's past lives while the new parts of town bring forth its more recent guises.

Immediately upon entering the city you will notice the war-damaged buildings, although the Old Town is now more or less rebuilt. The city suffered an extreme battering during the '90s conflict, and was among the worst-affected places in the entire country when it came to architectural destruction. Many ruins remain along the former front-line area, which is slowly being rebuilt.

EAST BANK, WEST BANK: MOSTAR'S RECENT HISTORY

In April 1992 Mostar was attacked by Serbian and Montenegrin forces from the surrounding hills. When the heavy bombardment subsided after some six months, fresh trouble was brewing in the injured city. On 9 May 1993 a bitter conflict started between the Croats and Muslims, formerly allied against the Serbian army. The Bosnian Croat forces attacked the Muslims of the city, expelling them from their homes and moving them en masse to detention camps on the east bank of the Neretva River. For two years the conflict continued, with the more powerful Croats pummelling the Muslim side of the city to rubble and strategically destroying the Old Bridge in November 1993. This single event resonated louder than the thousands of dead, and seemed to symbolise the apparent hopelessness of the Bosnian war.

Mostar surfaced in 1995 severely damaged, both physically and spiritually. The once mixed population was divided. Many left the city, and crossing from one side of the town to the other often resulted in revenge beatings. The city resembled Dresden after the end of WWII, and all of its bridges were destroyed.

In the years since, things have gradually improved. Mostar has been largely rebuilt and many refugees have returned to their prewar homes (although others remain where they had fled to during the conflict). Crossing from one part of town to the other is now completely trouble-free, and Mostarians go shopping and strolling as they did before the war. Buildings have been reconstructed and renovated, but there is still a significant amount of ghostlike rubble, particularly along the old front-line area, the Bulevar. The rebuilding of the Old Bridge (Stari Most) has helped to raise the city's spirit, although it will take decades for true reconciliation to take place.

Orientation

Though there are no physical barriers here, Croats live on the western side of the Neretva River and Muslims on the east (though Muslims also control a small strip on the river's west bank). These days people cross freely between these areas, and for travellers there's absolutely no fuss.

Maps are sold at local kiosks and tourist agencies.

Information**INTERNET ACCESS**

Cob Net (☎ 555 301; Maršala Tita bb; per hr 1KM; ☎ 8am-10pm) Situated behind Maršala Tita.

Hotel Bristol (☎ 500 100; Mostarskog Bataljona bb; per hr 5KM; ☎ 24hr) There's one Internet computer in the foyer here.

LEFT LUGGAGE

Luggage storage is available in the bus station for 2KM per item per day.

MONEY

Raiffeisen Bank (☎ 398 398; Kralja Tvrtka; ☎ 8am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, to 1pm Sat) Cashes travellers cheques and has an ATM that takes all cards.

Zagrebačka Bank (☎ 312 120; Kardinala Stepinca 18; ☎ 8am-2.30pm Mon-Fri, to noon Sat) Does Western Union transfers, cashes travellers cheques and has an ATM that takes all cards.

POST

Post office (☎ 327 915; Dr Ante Starčevića bb; ☎ 7am-7pm Mon-Fri, to 6pm Sat) Poste-restante mail from window 12 and a bureau de change.

TELEPHONE & FAX

Telephone Centre (☎ 327 915; Dr Ante Starčevića bb; ☎ 7am-8pm Mon-Fri, to 7pm Sat, 8am-noon Sun) Located at the post office.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Tourist Information Centre (☎ 397 350; www.hercegovina.ba; Onešćukova bb; ☎ 9am-9pm) A useful one-stop shop. Sells maps, guidebooks and postcards, and books accommodation, buses, planes and trains.

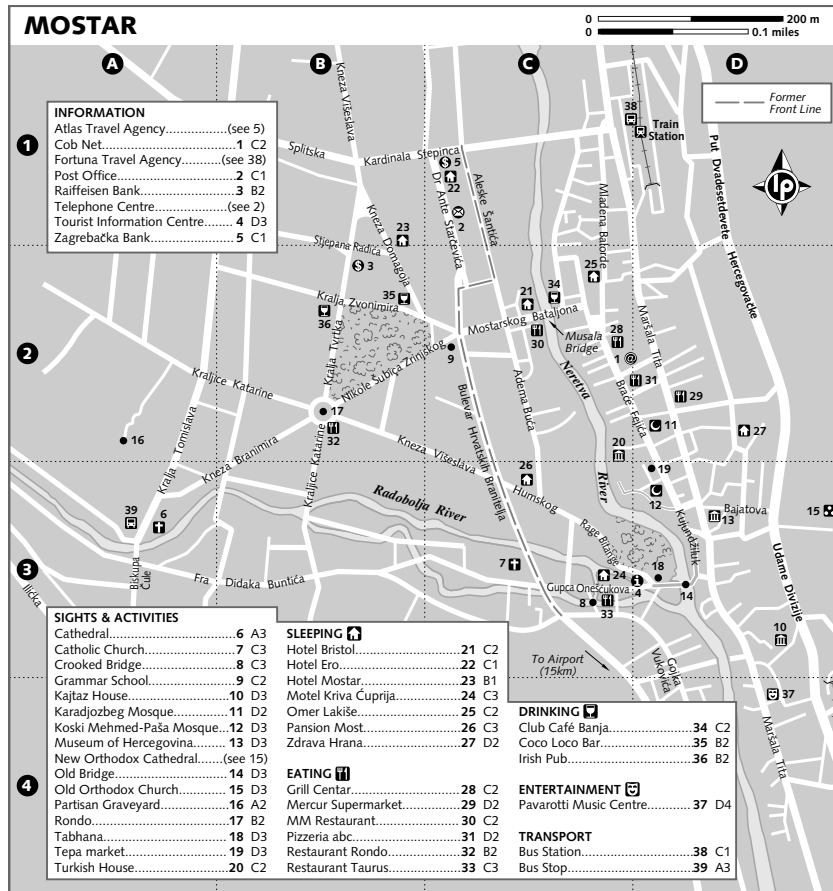
TRAVEL AGENCIES

Atlas Travel Agency (☎ 326 631; fax 318 771; Kardinala Stepinca bb; ☎ 9am-4pm Mon-Fri, to noon Sat) Books hotels, flights, ferries and arranges car hire; maps available.

Fortuna Travel Agency (☎ 552 197; www.fortuna.ba; Trg Ivana Krndelja 1; ☎ 8am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat) Sells maps and booklets, books accommodation, and arranges plane and ferry tickets and car hire. It's in the bus station.

Sights

Old Bridge (Stari Most) is the obvious place to start sightseeing. Originally built in 1556 to replace a nearby wooden bridge, it was named 'petrified moon' on account of its



slender and elegant beauty. Recently rebuilt, the 'new version' resembles the old in minute detail, since the architects and the builders used the original methods traced back to the 16th century (see opposite).

A great time of the year to be here is during the annual diving competition that takes place every July. Young men from all over the country (and all over former Yugoslavia) gather to jump off the bridge into the river 21m below. Before the war the young divers were known as 'the Icaruses of Mostar' and their display of masculinity had a certain pulling power among the girls of the town. In fact, a man was not a real man if he hadn't plunged off the bridge at least once in his life.

During the time when the Old Bridge was destroyed and a wooden bridge stood in its place (1993–2004), the diving competition carried on almost as an act of defiance. The divers jumped off the presumed highest point, replaced by a wooden plank. Now the bridge has been rebuilt, it seems that Mostar's young divers are embracing the tradition with particular frenzy. And while once upon a time boys dove into the freezing Neretva for nothing more than a cigarette or their macho-badge, today's divers are a little more demanding. Hard currency is what they're after, and foreign currency particular. The diving spectacle is a performance and the members of the 'divers' club', housed in one of the towers

on the very edge of the bridge, provides the showmen.

Watch the way they do it, it's rather intricate. Two blokes stand around, one of them being the diver and the other 'the hustler' (although they take their roles in turn). One stands on the edge of the bridge, as if preparing to dive, while the other starts clapping his hands maniacally 'to excite the tourists'. Once enough touristy-looking people gather around, the happy clapper collects money from the crowd. They will not dive until they've collected their minimum (the actual figure is still a

mystery). The sign that they've gathered enough is when another bloke runs out to the bridge with a kettle of cold water, which the diver will pour on his head to prepare for the shock of the freezing Neretva River. (The river retains its cold temperature even on the hottest of days.) And so on, all day long. You've got to admire them, really.

On each side of the bridge are the **towers of Tara and Helebija**. They stand as architectural anchors to the bridge and as guardians of the crossing. Semicircular Tara, on the west bank, served as a gunpowder and ammunition store during Ottoman times

REBUILDING HISTORY

In 1557, at the request of local businessmen, the Turkish architect Hayrudin was employed by Suleyman the Magnificent to build a stone bridge in Mostar. It would replace the suspension bridge which was said to frighten tradesmen as they swung and wobbled their way over the fast-flowing Neretva River.

Mostar's Old Bridge took nine years to build and was opened some time between July and September in 1566. It was built out of local Tenelija stone, which is very pale and appears to change colour depending on the position of the sun and the strength of its rays. Local history contains many myths surrounding the construction of Old Bridge – one of the favourites is that Hayrudin was so afraid that the bridge would collapse once the scaffolding was removed that he fled to the nearby Dervish monastery and never saw the completed structure. By contrast, another story tells how, after the scaffolding had been removed, Hayrudin lay under the bridge for three days, risking his life to prove the structure was stable. Whatever the truth, the bridge stood for 427 years.

The bridge was destroyed in November 1993 and it took more than 10 years for it to be rebuilt. Quite apart from the expectations of Mostar's citizens, the reconstruction challenge was overwhelming. As it was such an important symbol, the new bridge had to be identical to the Old Bridge. It was decided to rebuild it using the 16th-century methods, without the interference of modern building technology. A puzzle presented itself in the old stone-construction work. In ancient times stone was quarried and cut using average measures and the results depended largely on its natural availability. It was assembled onto the centring almost randomly. So although the original bridge was soundly built, it was not regular, and the anomalies created by this method of assembling were at the same time both the real beauty of the bridge and the origin of its complex geometry. In the rebuilding, this random assembly had to be replicated; in order to recreate the shape and the imperfections, each stone had to be cut separately to its own particular shape and planned position.

The same type of stone from the same quarry was used for the rebuilding project. Tenelija stone has good mechanical properties – it is light and resistant to damp and frost. The original blocks that had fallen into the river in 1993 had become unusable by the time they were recovered in 1996. The relatively soft stone had eroded and the metal connections had rusted and created cracks that had rendered it unusable. However, part of the Old Bridge that remained standing after the bridge's destruction – five rows of stone and the whole of the abutment – has been used on the west bank of the Neretva River.

The bombing of the bridge in 1993 was partly a strategic act, but it was also a symbolic destruction of what the bridge represented: beauty, unity and history. Mostar housed Christians, Muslims and Jews alike, but when the bridge was destroyed, it became a divided city. With its reconstruction, the people of Mostar are being reminded of how they used to live, and how they might live again.

and now houses 'the divers' cooperative'; Helebija, on the east bank, housed a dungeon on its lower floors and a guardhouse above. Herceguša, a third tower, stands behind the Tara.

Good spots from which to take photos of the bridge and towers are a small terrace garden amid some art galleries next to 158 Maršala Tita on the eastern bank; the west bank of the Neretva right under the Old Bridge, also a great spot from where to watch the divers plunge; and the top of Kujundžuluk street.

The cobbled street to the east of the bridge is **Kujundžuluk**, part of the Old Town. One of the oldest streets in Mostar, this is the place where *kujunžije* (copper beaters) traditionally work their craft, and the street is named after them. You will also see some wonderful paintings in the artists' studios along the street. It's a lovely place in which to wander a little, and when you hear the sound of hammering on copper (or as some romantically call it 'Mostar's heart-beat'), step into the dark shop and watch the craftsmen at work.

Across the Old Bridge is the other side of the **Old Town**, and its narrow streets are filled with little shops selling Turkish-style souvenirs, and cafés and restaurants. Nearby is the miniature version of the Old Bridge, **Crooked Bridge** (Kriva Čuprija). It is said to have been the model on which its bigger sister was built. This too is a reconstruction, since the old Čuprija was destroyed by a flood in 2001. Unfortunately, the new construction does not do justice to the old one; an elegant and frail arch has been replaced by a chunky, clumsy one.

Back in the Old Town, one of the most popular places for a freshly squeezed lemonade, coffee sipping, or *ćevap* eating is the **Tabhana** (Stari Grad bb), formerly a Turkish bath, now a courtyard with lots of bars and restaurants. You will recognise it by the six domes on its roof and by the courtyard full of students and teenagers sunning themselves. If you go under the small arch, you will see that the entire river bank, actually a cliff face, is covered with various cafés and restaurants and that the view of the Old Bridge is the perfect background to your lunch.

On the other side of the Old Bridge, and after Kujundžuluk, is the 1617 **Koski Mehmed-Paša mosque** (Braće Fejića bb). Have a look at the

Islamic architecture and wander around both the mosque and the lovely courtyard outside, since this mosque is specially designated for tourist sightseeing. The paintings and the carved woodwork seen inside are an exquisite example of Ottoman art. You can climb up the minaret (2KM) for some amazing views.

The **Tepa market** (Braće Fejića bb; ☎ 6.30am-2pm), beyond the mosque, has been going since Turkish times and, judging by some of the characters that work here, it seems that some of the staff date back to that time too. Buy your cherries, figs and watermelons from here in spring and summer; they are fresh and delicious.

Further on is the 350-year-old **Turkish House** (☎ 550 677; Biševića 13; admission €1; ☎ 9am-3pm Nov-Feb, 8am-8pm Mar-Oct), furnished for the life of a Mostar somebody. The symbolism of the courtyard is intriguing: the ground is decorated with circles of pebbles divided into five sectors denoting the number of times a good Muslim must pray each day. The fountain has 12 spouts for the months, filling four watering pots that symbolise the seasons. Surrounding the fountain are three stone globes, one for the day we were born, the second facing Mecca for the life we lead and the third for death.

Upstairs the rooms are divided into men's and women's quarters. Muslim men had more than one wife and a white cloth draped over a closed door was a signal that the wife was ready to receive her husband. The back room of the house directly overhangs the river.

The lady who looks after the house has a passion for turtles and keeps more than 10 in the courtyard. On a hot day you can refresh yourself with a glass of rose-petal juice, a sweet concoction that'll give you a sugar rush and the energy to chase those turtles.

There is an even older Turkish house called **Kajtaz House** (☎ 550 913; Gaše lića 21; admission 2KM; ☎ 8am-8pm), behind the Pavarotti Music Centre.

As you leave the Old Town and enter a more modern-looking part, the **Karadžozbeg mosque** (Braće Fejića; admission 2KM; ☎ 9am-6pm) will be to your right. Mostar's most important mosque was built in 1557 and its minaret, as well as other parts of the buildings, were heavily damaged during the war. Now

completely renovated, the mosque is open to visitors. A man will let you climb the minaret too. Behind the mosque is the old Muslim graveyard, the oldest in town, with beautiful grey *turbe* (tombstones) standing in the grass.

Braće Fejića is the centre of day- and night-life on the east bank of the city. Youngsters sit, drink coffee, smoke, and mouth the words of the songs banging out of the speakers.

Up the hill, above the old Brankovac neighbourhood, is the site of the **old Orthodox church** (Bjelušine bb). A tiny old chapel which predates the Orthodox church remains here, but cannot be entered. A legend tells of an ingenious priest who managed to save his daughter from the paws of the local *bey* (senior officer of the Ottoman Empire) and build the chapel by tricking the *bey* at his own game. After many refusals, the *bey* promised to let the priest build a church on a piece of ground no larger than the size of the jumper he was wearing. The priest, clever as he was, realised that even though the jumper itself was much too small for a church, the wool out of which it was made would stretch for many metres. And so charming the *bey* with his witty inventiveness, the church was built and his daughter never married the *bey*.

Further south is the Pavarotti Music Centre (p117), a project originally designed and built by the War Child group; the building now hosts many different events. Apart from plays and concerts, the centre's main activity are music- and art-therapy groups for children. War Child is a network of humanitarian organisations who work with children affected by war all over the world.

Heading over to the west bank of the river from Braće Fejića street you will cross the **Musalala Bridge** (more commonly known by its former name, Tito's Bridge). Just before you get there, you will see the old Austro-Hungarian-style music school and next to it the public baths, with one of the best bars in town, Club Café Banja (p117), on the top floor. The ruined old Hotel Neretva, on your right, still awaits renewal.

Head west for a few hundred metres, and you will come to the dramatic **former front line**, which now essentially divides the town between Muslims and Croats. It starts at the street behind Hotel Ero, then runs one street west to the main boulevard. Gutted

buildings still stand like ghosts, their empty windows gaping like skeletal eye sockets.

The once-stately **Grammar School** (Gimnazija; cnr Nikole Šubića Zrinskog & Bulevar Hrvatskih Branitelja), built in 1896, is now a damaged, yet solid piece of Austro-Hungarian architecture with Moorish flourishes. It was once the most prestigious secondary school in town, and today its floors are divided for teaching in Bosnian and Croatian languages.

In the background stands the **Catholic Church** (Bulevar Hrvatskih Branitelja bb), with an out-of-proportion campanile (bell tower). The original was extended after the war and smacks of 'my campanile is higher than your minaret' one-upmanship. Poor workmanship has meant that it's acquired a lean. Higher up on the hillside is a large white cross that's also a recent addition. Apparently put there to annoy the Muslim population, a local is reported to have said he's grown to like it, because upon seeing it first thing in the morning, he feels like he's woken up in Rio.

The **Museum of Hercegovina** (☎ 551 602; Bajatova 4; admission 1.50KM; ☎ 9am-2pm Mon-Fri, 10am-noon Sat) is the former house of Džemal Bijedić, ex-head of the Yugoslav government who died in mysterious circumstances in 1978. Now a small museum, dedicated more to Mostar than Bijedić, it has as its prize exhibit a 10-minute film on how Mostar used to be before 1990, with footage of the bridge-giving competition and the actual destruction of the bridge.

At the bottom of the hill below the museum is a telling graveyard where all the headstones share the same date of death.

There are two other sights of interest on the west bank. The first is the **Rondo** roundabout, an area where many dine alfresco. The second is the **Partisan Graveyard** (Kraljice Katarine), a truly socialist monument that was built to commemorate Mostar's Partisans. In socialist Yugoslavia this was the place where young pioneers made their vows to remain faithful to the path of Comrade Tito.

Sleeping

Both **Fortuna Travel Agency** (☎ 552 197; www.fortuna.ba; Trg Ivana Krdelja 1; per person 20-50KM; ☎ 8am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat) and the local Tourist Information Centre (p111) can book private accommodation.

Motel Kriva Čuprija (☎ 550 953, 061 135 286; www.motel-mostar.de; Kriva Čuprija 2; s/d/apt €23/42/45; ☎)

As the name suggests, this is right next to the Crooked Bridge. With that lovely sight next to you and a good restaurant (Restaurant Taurus) next door, what else could you need? The rooms are well equipped and comfortable, and some have kitchenettes. Downstairs is a lovely terraced restaurant to have your breakfast at, while gazing at the river. The owner is a returnee from Germany who's happy to help. It's tops.

Hotel Mostar (☎ 322 679; fax 315 693; Kneza Domagoja bb; s/d 53/86KM; (P)) A good option for a standard hotel, with clean and airy rooms and small bathrooms. Ground- and top-floor rooms have balconies. The restaurant is pleasant with many plants and a choice of local dishes.

Hotel Bristol (☎ 500 100; www.bristol.co.ba; Mostarskog Bataljona bb; s/d 72.50/111KM; (P)) Opened in 1904, this fine Austro-Hungarian building was once a legendary gathering place. The Bristol has undergone some significant changes since. Almost completely destroyed in the war and then rebuilt, it is a popular place with the international crowd. The singles are quite cramped, but the doubles a bit better. Specify if you want a room with a balcony, as not all rooms have them. The one computer in the foyer costs 5KM per hour for Internet access.

Pansion Most (☎ 552 528; fax 552 660; Adema Buća 100; s 45-52KM, d 65-75KM; (P)) An eight-room *pansion* on the western edge of the Old Town. Here's your chance to experience Mostar's religious rivalry first hand – the *pansion* is caught between the bells of the gigantic church tower and the call to prayer from the nearby mosque. The rooms are clean, tidy and pleasant and the receptionist speaks excellent English. Internet access is 3KM per hour, and there are maps and brochures available, a currency exchange and a laundry room.

Hotel Ero (☎ 386 777; www.ero.ba; Dr Ante Starčevića bb; s/d 79/136KM; (P)) This has for some years now been a second home to Mostar's UN troops and officials. The bar and restaurant are always buzzing with important (some) bodies. The rooms are bright with cream-coloured walls and white marble, and each has a nice small balcony. There is also wheelchair access.

Omer Lakiše (☎ 551 627; Mladena Balorče 21a; B&B with shared bathroom 20KM) Kind professor Omer (now retired) lets out rooms in his home,

which is hidden away in a quiet street. If you speak French or German, you're in luck because Omer taught both at Mostar's university, but he speaks a bit of English too. There are eight beds in two rooms and homeliness compensates for the shared bathroom and full rooms.

Zdrava Hrana (☎ /fax 551 444; Alikačića 5; per person €15) Set out on three floors, up a hilly street, Zdrava Hrana suits groups better than individual travellers. There are apartments made up of two double bedrooms and a kitchenette, but they have no cooking facilities. You can have a DIY breakfast or order one for 5KM.

Eating

Čevapi spots are everywhere, of course. In the Old Town, especially the Tabhana area, restaurants dot the river bank and have perfect views of the Old Bridge. Enjoy a traditional coffee with Turkish delight, or a lunch of *šopska salata* (consisting of chopped tomato, cucumber and onion, topped with grated soft white cheese) and fresh trout.

Restaurant Taurus (☎ 212 617; meals 8-15KM; ☎ 8am-late) An old mill right off Oneščukova, by the Crooked Bridge on the Radobolja River, this place serves some brilliant seafood dishes. The black squid-ink risotto is a treat, as is the shell pasta and, in fact, just about everything on the menu. The terrace looks onto the river and is cool in the summer, and the inside of the restaurant is like a mountain barn with a cosy-looking fireplace.

Pizzeria abc (☎ 194 656; Braće Fejića 45; meals 5-9KM; ☎ 8am-11pm Mon-Sat, noon-11pm Sun) This is an extension of the most popular cake shop in town. The pasta and 25 varieties of pizza here are highly recommended. Pretend to be one of the locals as you sit on the pavement terrace outside and watch everyone who's anyone walk by on their compulsory evening stroll.

Restaurant Rondo (☎ 322 100; cnr Kraljice Katerine & Save Kovačevića; meals 7-14KM; ☎ 7am-midnight; (P)) On the Rondo roundabout, hence the name, this is a great place to try some really traditional food (or you can go for the Italian options). Tasty recommendations are *buredžike* (yogurt-covered type of *burek*, 3KM), although be prepared for mega-garlic breath; the *zeljanica* (spinach pie, 3KM); the *sirnica* (4KM); or one of the nine soups (2.50KM).

Grill Centar (☎ 061 198 111; Braće Fejića 13; grills 3-4KM; ☎ 7am-10.30pm) A quick nibble on a *čevap* with *kajmak* (curdled milk turned to cheese) and a round lump of *lepinja* (a type of pitta bread) and off you go. The wooden benches and tables are for fast-eating customers only, eager to move on and explore the city.

MM Restaurant (☎ 580 192; Mostarskog Bataljona bb; meals 6-12KM; ☎ 8am-10pm Mon-Sat) A good breakfast spot with ham and eggs (3KM) which will make some feel at home; for vegetarians there are also a few tasty options.

Mercur Supermarket (Maršala Tita bb; ☎ 7am-10pm) There are plenty of different food goodies for self-caterers here.

Drinking

Mostar has some good bars, and on week-ends the partying goes on till the wee hours. The Old Town is lively in the evenings but most bars close around midnight. On the west bank there are clusters of bars in the shopping centre on the Rondo roundabout, and on the long stretch of Kralja Tomislava near the Partisan Graveyard, where there are also fast-food places and games rooms.

Club Café Banja (Mostarskog Bataljona 8; ☎ 8pm-late, summer only) On the roof terrace of the old baths, this is the hippest place in town and probably the only one where youngsters from the east and west banks come to drink together. The Neretva River cools the air from below, the stars twinkle above, and you might just find yourself lounging on a chaise longue next to a handsome Mostarian. A real summer idyll.

Coco Loco Bar (☎ 328 004; Kneza Domagoja bb; ☎ 8am-11pm) This place feels like someone's house, especially on weekends when there's a house party atmosphere with ownerscum-DJs entertaining an animated crowd. Minimal décor and a focus on fun.

Irish Pub (☎ 315 338; Kralja Zvonimira 15b; ☎ 8am-11pm Sun-Thu, 8am-1am Fri & Sat) If you thought you couldn't have a quiet pint in Mostar, think again. This ersatz Irish pub serves Guinness and Kilkenny Bitter, so sit back and think of Ireland.

Entertainment

Pavarotti Music Centre (☎ 550 750; www.pavarottimusiccentre.com; Maršala Tita 179; ☎ 9am-10pm) This is the hub of Mostar's cultural activities for young people, with a variety of exhibitions and concerts.

Getting There & Away

Mostar lies on the route between Sarajevo and the coast. Frequent buses run from the **bus station** (☎ 552 025; Trg Ivana Krdelja) to Sarajevo (13.5KM, 2½ hours) Split (17KM, four hours) Dubrovnik (20KM, three hours) and Zagreb (43KM, 9½ hours).

Buses to Medugorje (4KM, 40 minutes) go from the Mostar's main bus station.

The **train station** (☎ 552 198) is upstairs from the bus station. Two daily trains travel to the coast at Ploče and two go to Sarajevo; there is also a daily train to and from Zagreb. See p133 for departure and arrival times.

The airport handles charter flights only.

Around Mostar

About 15km southeast of Mostar is the village of **Blagaj** on the green Buna River. Down at the very end of town, where the river comes gushing out of a towering cliff, is the 16th-century **Tekija** (Dervish monastery; ☎ 573 221; admission 2KM; ☎ 8am-9pm). Because water is seen as a powerful spiritual element, the Tekija was home to dervishes for centuries. These days they meet here every May. Two wooden tombs in an upper room house the bodies of two Tajik dervishes who arrived with the Turks at the end of the 15th century. You must take your shoes off before entering and women will be given a shawl to cover their head and shoulders with (unless you have one of your own). Downstairs are souvenirs, and the café on the terrace serves traditional coffee with Turkish delight.

Also in Blagaj, on the top of a high hill, is the **Fortress of Herceg Stjepan**. Herceg Stjepan ruled Hum, present-day Hercegovina, in the Middle Ages, and the fortress remains a magnificent place to climb to for the views of the valley below. Originally an Illyrian settlement, the fortress was in the hands of the Romans, the Bosnians and Hercegovinians, and then the Ottomans. It's an hour's climb up, so if you are attempting it in the summer, start very early in the morning, before it gets too hot.

Buses from the main station go to Blagaj (1.5KM, 30 minutes)

POČITELJ

One of Hercegovina's little gems, this small town is on the road that leads from Mostar to the coast, around 25km south of the

city. Heavily damaged during the war, this Ottoman-style beauty has been almost fully restored and the people of Počitelj have returned to their homes. Many of its inhabitants even found Mostar overwhelming when they had to leave their small town, and those who have returned did so because they claim to be unable to find a more beautiful place to live.

In the town you can visit the **Dadži-Alija mosque** and the **Sinan-Ibrahimpasha madrasa**. The beautiful **Clocktower** (Sahat kula), high up on top of the hill in which the town is embedded, is still not reachable due to ruins that remain around it. Wander around Počitelj's little streets and then have a coffee on one of the terraces in the Ottoman surroundings.

Buses from the main station go to Počitelj via Čapljina (4KM, 40 minutes).

KRAVICE WATERFALLS

The 25m cascades that stretch across 100m of hills are a like a (smaller) Niagara Falls and the Adriatic sea rolled into one. You can swim in the pool created by the rushing water. There are a couple of restaurants and cafés just by the water.

There is no public transport from Mostar. If you are driving from Mostar you will turn right at Počitelj, onto the road to Ljubuski. Off the road to Ljubuski, you turn left for Kravice, at a little sign.

HUTOVO BLATO

This is one of the top bird reserves in the country and home to over 250 migratory birds. The Mediterranean marshes of the **Deransko Lake** are said to host around 10,000 feathered friends at a time. Geese, hawks, pheasants and many other creatures make perfect subjects on the **photo safari** (100KM for a group of 15; boat only rented when full), as do the lotus leaves. Check with the office at the reserve for further details on the safari. Fishing is allowed with a permit, and there are plenty of eel and carp. There's no public transport to the park.

PODVELEŽJE

Once only known for its highland sheep rearing, the face of Podveležje was changed forever by one man. He built a little hotel, cooked some good food and took his guests trekking up Mt Velež, one of Hercegovina's

highest peaks (1967m). **Motel Sunce** (☎ 560 082; www.hercegovina.ba; r per person from 25KM) is at the centre of all activity. Not only can you eat delicious homemade food in the hotel, you can also take it up into the mountain with you. A guide for a day trip is €30 and lunch is €10 extra. A two-day excursion, which includes taking a horse with you and sleeping under the stars, comes to around €100. Sharing with a group makes the costs less. If you fancy trekking solo, maps are provided. Always remember the mine warning. From July to August you can go medicinal-herb picking.

Pick-up from Mostar's main bus/train station is available. If you are driving, follow the road to Blagaj and watch out for the turn for Podveležje (signs lead to the motel). From Mostar's bus station, take bus 16 all the way to Smajkići village in Podveležje.

STOLAC

After Mostar and Trebinje, Stolac is the smallest of the three Hercegovinian towns hailed for their beauty. It suffered a lot of damage in the recent war, but some impressive buildings still remain, such as the **Church of St Peter and St Paul**, built in 1500, and the **three Ottoman bridges**, Inat Čuprija, Podgradska Čuprija, and Begovska Čuprija, dating from the 15th and 17th centuries.

One of the most fascinating and mysterious historical monuments in the Stolac area, however, is the **necropolis** at Radimlja, containing between 120 and 130 *stećci* (graves and tombstones), belonging to the followers of the medieval Bosnian church (see p92).

There are several *stećci* necropolises throughout the country, and the one at Radimlja is considered to be among the most important for its exquisite stone engravings. It has been interpreted that the engraved symbols represent the profession or rank of the deceased. A riding figure denotes a person who might have got rich as a caravan leader or horse trader. Equally, the enlarged hand on a standing figure and a bow and arrow on the side represents a noble hunter or knight. Some are simply decorative. Radimlja is on the Čapljina road, 3km from Stolac. Buses run from Mostar's main station pretty much all day from 6.30am to 6.20pm (4KM, 1½ hours).

MEĐUGORJE

☎ 036 / pop 4300

Once a nondescript, poor Hercegovinian village, Međugorje became one of the most visited places in the former Yugoslavia when six teenagers claimed that the Holy Virgin spoke to them on 24 June 1981. Since then Međugorje has become a 'global village', with groups of German, French, Korean, Italian and English visitors storming the place regularly, along with the almost-local Irish (there's that many of them!). These Catholic visitors are all here hoping for one thing only: to catch a glimpse of the Virgin Mary at the place she is said to have appeared. Three of the original six teenagers still claim to see the vision daily, while the Virgin Mary only appears for the other three on special days.

Međugorje is awash with souvenir shops selling everything from holy water to fluorescent rosaries, Jesus pencil cases and cross-adorned raincoats. Frankly, it's a sea of kitsch, yet the crowds seem to love it, and even though there are more *pansions* and restaurants per square metre than seems decent, come summertime, they're all packed. (The local wine production can take some credit for that, since the wine from this region is the best in the country.)

The Catholic Church has not officially acknowledged the apparitions (the first in Europe since Lourdes, France, in 1858 and Fatima, Portugal, in 1917).

Međugorje largely escaped the war – some locals attribute this to divine protection but a more likely explanation is that it's an exclusively Croatian area. The conflict zone was as close as 35km away.

Obviously, the Međugorje boom times are around Easter, when the anniversary of the first appearance of the Virgin is celebrated in a parade called the Walk of Peace; the Assumption of the Virgin (15 August); and the Nativity of the Virgin (first Sunday after 8 September).

If accommodation is booked out, Mostar is less than hour away by bus.

Orientation

Međugorje has no street names or numbers. In fact, it's fair to say that there is really only one street, the one stretching for around 500m between the post office and St James' Church. This is where most of the shops,

banks, restaurants and travel agencies are. There are some *pansions* further from the post office but most are dotted along the lanes that reach into the fields and vineyards. Southwest behind the church is Mt Križevac, while Apparition Hill is to the south.

Any of the travel agents can provide a topographical map.

Information

The euro is the favoured foreign currency and is used in most pricing.

Globtour (☎ /fax 651 393, 651 593) Books ferries and runs buses to Split, Dubrovnik and Sarajevo.

Paddy Travel (☎ /fax 651482; paddy@tel.net.ba; ☎ 9am-3pm Mon-Sat Nov-Mar, to 6pm Mon-Sat Apr-Oct) Books accommodation, changes travellers cheques and organises day trips.

Post office (☎ 651 510; ☎ 7am-9pm Mon-Sat, 10am-5pm Sun) Internet (per hr 4KM), telephone, postal services and cash advances on credit cards.

Ured Informacija (☎ 651 988; www.medjugorje.hr; ☎ 9am-6pm) Information office for church schedules and the Virgin Mary monthly message.

Vox Tours (☎ /fax 650 771; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, to 2pm Sat) Books airline and ferry tickets, and arranges car hire.

Zagrebačka Bank (☎ 650 862; ☎ 8am-2.30pm Mon-Fri, to noon Sat) Cashes travellers cheques and has an ATM that accepts all cards.

Sights & Activities

Completed in 1969 before the apparitions began, **St James' Church** is the centre of all religious activity. Prayers, said in many languages, ring from the loudspeakers surrounding the church. A small outside conservatory, behind the church, together with many rows of chairs (both inside and outside of the conservatory) is a pleasant area for prayer.

Following the little path behind the church for around 200m you will reach the **Resurrected Saviour**, also known as the Weeping Knee statue, so called because this gaudy metallic figure of Christ on the Cross oozes liquid at the knee. Pilgrims look on in awe, and bring their rosaries, medallions and small bottles to fill up on the supposedly holy fluid. Indeed something does ooze from a faint crack at the knee, but whether this is a matter of a miracle or some internal plumbing is for the devout and sceptic to debate.

Apparition Hill, where the Virgin was first seen on 24 June 1981, is near Podbrdo

hamlet, southwest of town. On the way up, rocks stick out of the red earth like crooked teeth and their sharp edges can be sore on the feet, especially for those going barefoot in the act of penitence. On the way are 14 Stations of the Cross where pilgrims stop to pray. The place of the alleged apparition, part way up the hill, is marked by a statue of the Virgin. Behind her is a blue cross conveying a message of peace. To reach Apparition Hill, take the road curving left (east) from the centre of town, and follow the signs to Podbrdo (1.5km away).

Mt Križevac (Cross Mountain) lies about 2.5km southwest of town. The climb up takes around an hour and, again, the sea of sharp rock challenges the feet. On the top, a white cross awaits, planted there in 1934 to commemorate the 1900th anniversary of Christ's death, or, according to some locals, to keep away the plague that devastated the area at that time. Groups pray together along the 14 Stations of the Cross depicting the suffering of Jesus. The climb is steep and you too can feel the pain. Good shoes are essential unless you're doing it the hard way – in bare feet. No candles please as there's a fire danger.

Refresh at any of the bars at the bottom of the hill.

If trudging up rocky hillsides is not enough activity and you want to go swimming, play tennis or football, or just enjoy a good fitness centre, then the **Circle International** (☎ 651 401; Tromedja bb; admission from €2.50; 🕒 9am-9pm), a sports complex about 2km away on the Mostar road, is the place for all that activity. If your feet have suffered on those rocks, and your face has been burnt by the sun, you can have yourself a pampering session, with massage, spa pools, sauna and a solarium all on offer. It's all your prayers answered.

Sleeping

With 17,000 rooms, Međugorje probably has more accommodation than the rest of Bosnia and Hercegovina combined. As likely as not you'll be sleeping under a cross or image of the Virgin Mary.

Beds are fairly easy to find, except around major holidays. *Pansions* and hotels can fill with large tour groups, so book in advance. Most *pansion* rooms look the same, though they are most expensive around the church. Most friendly proprietors offer the choice

of B&B, half board or full board, and home-made meals are usually complemented with a bottle of *domaće vino* (homemade wine).

The town's few hotels are blander and more expensive than the *pansions*, and the rooms are not much better.

If you thought you could never get the hang of the local language, perhaps the Irish owners of **Paddy Travel** (☎ /fax 651482; paddy@tel.net.ba; r from €15; 🕒 9am-3pm Mon-Sat Nov-Mar, to 6pm Mon-Sat Apr-Oct) can set a good example. Fluent and friendly, they can sort out accommodation for you in a tick, as they have access to 15 of the town's *pansions*.

Over the road from Paddy Travel, **Vox Tours** (☎ /fax 650 771; per person half/full board from €20/26; 🕒 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat) deals with most of the *pansions* in town.

Pansion Stanko Vasilij (☎ 651 042; per person B&B/half board/full board €15/20/25) The owner of this *pansion* happens to be the most famous wine maker in the country. His Žilavka (the local white) has won him many an award. The rooms are airy and clean, and the old-fashioned tavern downstairs is a good place for food and that tasty wine sampling. It's 200m southeast of the bottom of the Mt Križevac trail.

Pansion Park (☎ 651 155; fax 651 494; r B&B/half board/full board €15/22/28) There are two large peach-coloured Alpine chalets with spacious, pleasant rooms and balconies here, fronted by a large garden and seating area. Like most, it's a family-run *pansion* and the hosts are friendly and helpful. There is a large restaurant to cater for those who have opted for half or full board.

Pansion Ivo (☎ 651 973; s/d €12/24) Turning left at the post office if you're coming from the church, you'll probably see Mr Ivo having a coffee and chatting to his mates outside the *pansion*. His is a small house with basic, modern rooms that are good for a couple of nights' stay. There is even a shop opposite if you feel like a snack.

Pansion Zemo (☎ /fax 651 878; www.međugorjetravel.com/zemo; Kozine district; camp site per person & tent/B&B/half board €3/9/14; 📍) This is only really good if you have a car, since the 1km walk can be a nightmare in the summer heat. Otherwise, this *pansion* is in a nice quiet spot in the village fields, southeast of the church. If you are not into camping you can rent a room, some of which have bathrooms, while others share.

Eating

Međugorje's eating options are good, especially considering it's such a small place. Seafood is tasty and fresh, and the Italian options are decent and mostly *al dente*.

Dubrovnik (☎ 651 472; meals €3-6; 🕒 7am-late) The Dubrovnik has a great outside seating area looking straight onto the churchyard, and a delicious Italian menu. There are good soups, delicious prosciutto and tasty desserts, and even some Guinness if you've had enough of the local wine. Sometimes a bit of partying goes on here, with an accordion getting everybody on the improvised dance floor.

Galija (☎ 651 535; meals €4-5; 🕒 10am-11pm) With a large galley on its roof, Galija's crew in goes for Italian cooking. Recommended is the *risotto alle verdure* (risotto with vegetables and herbs), especially interesting for vegetarians and those who like their risotto more crunchy and less sludgy.

Pizzeria Colombo (pizzas €5-7; 🕒 8am-midnight) Obviously catering to the many Irish pilgrims who flock to Međugorje, this most popular place between the post office and the church has pizza and, Hail Mary!, there's even Guinness. The tap on the bar dispensing this nectar is protected with a rosary to ensure a continual flow of this restorative elixir.

Diskont (☎ 650 780; 🕒 7am-10pm) This is a bigish supermarket, for a small town, about 100m from the post office on the road towards Mostar.

Shopping

If we haven't mentioned enough shopping choices already, here are some more: walking sticks with the image of the Virgin etched on them, jigsaws of the Virgin Mary, priest statues, Christs in snow domes, fluorescent Holy Virgins, pictures of the Virgin and Jesus melding into one as you walk left and right, and pictures of the Virgin and/or Jesus whose eyes follow you around the room. One hundred euro will buy you the vestments to hold your own mass, and €2500 will buy a 1.5m statue of the Virgin Mary, Jesus or the pope.

Meal-themed souvenirs include dried figs, homemade *rakija*, and traditional hand-woven tablecloths. As there is no specific commandment against copyright piracy, there are a number of shops selling very cheap CDs and fake designer sunglasses.

Getting There & Around

Most visitors come to Međugorje from Croatia with **Globtour** (☎ /fax 651 393, 651 593), running buses from Split (18KM, 3½ hours) and Dubrovnik (18KM, three hours) via Mostar. Frequent local buses run to Mostar (4KM, 40 minutes); ask at the post office when the next one will be.

Taxis overcharge a flat fee of €5 to anywhere in the town.

TREBINJE

☎ 059 / pop 30,200

Hailed as Hercegovina's most beautiful town after Mostar, Trebinje is a small place at the southernmost corner of the country, and within spitting distance of Dubrovnik. Leafy squares and a charming old town are cooled by the Trebišnjica River, which in turn is spanned by one of the country's loveliest bridges, the Arslanagić Bridge. The road towards Mostar is a real beauty, with giant mountains looming in the distance, golden fields stretched in between and vast blue skies above. Trebinje can be visited on a day trip from Mostar or Dubrovnik.

Orientation

Trebinje is in RS and therefore all the street signs are strictly in Cyrillic. Perhaps the best way to get your bearings is by looking for the new monastery, overlooking the town from a hill to the south. Arslanagić Bridge is a 15-minute walk east from the centre. Trebinje's central street is Kralja Petra Prvog Oslobođioca and runs north-south through the town. To the west is Desanka Maksimović street, taking you to the old town, and parallel to it is the shady Jovan Dučić square.

Sights

Trebinje is easily walked around and it won't take you more than a couple of hours of very easy-going strolling to see all the sights.

The most important sight is the **Arslanagić Bridge** with its looped arches and smaller decorative half-moon 'incisions'. Built by the Ottomans in 1574, the bridge was an important place of salt trade before the Dubrovnik road was built. It got its name after the rich Ottoman administrator Arslanaga, who collected toll money and built himself a house next to the bridge. The ancient structure has had some trouble staying in place in the last 60 years, and not because

of its age. Having been damaged in WWII with explosives and surviving the attack, the bridge was completely moved from its original location during the 1960s. The then communist government was building a hydro plant nearby, and managed to completely flood the bridge in the process, inflicting serious damage on the stone. The bridge was removed in 1965. Its stones lay on a site nearby until 1972, when the arches were constructed once again in their original form some metres down the river, closer to the town centre. Fortunately it had better luck in the recent conflict, unlike many other Ottoman buildings in the town.

Trebinje's **old town** sits on the banks of the Trebišnjica River. Its streets are filled with cafés and ancient trees, which throw shade on the hot pavement. The 18th-century Osman-Pasha mosque at the entrance to the old town, destroyed in the war, was recently repaired and is supposed to be functioning again by the time you read this.

The **Jovan Dučić square** nearby is where all of Trebinje hangs out, under the thick leaves of plane trees. Market sellers flog their stuff here in early mornings.

Next to the square is **Jovan Dučić park**, at the end of which you can bear witness to the wonders of socialist realist sculpture and stand in awe of the iron partisans – peasants and workers with a woman as their leader – charging forth in a frozen march.

On the hill south of the town is the **New Orthodox Monastery**, better known as the Hercegovinian Gračanica, since it was built on the model of the Gračanica monastery in Kosovo, a building sacred to many Serbs. Inside this one are the bones of Jovan Dučić, a poet and diplomat born in Trebinje who died in America in 1943, and a man whose work can be said to embody the essence of Serb nationalism. He has had a kind of renaissance in the last 15 years as his nationalist ideas have made him almost a national icon among the Serbs, particularly those in Trebinje. More interesting is the 15th-century **Tvrdoši Monastery** outside town.

If you are journeying between Mostar and Trebinje, you will travel through **Popovo Polje**, a rural region with stunning views and old-fashioned villages that seem to have been forgotten by time.

Sleeping

Hotel Platani (☎ 225 134/5; Svijetni Trg 1; s/d 65/115KM) If you decide to stay the night in Trebinje, this small hotel is a decent option with comfortable rooms and a nice café downstairs.

Eating & Drinking

As in the whole of Bosnia and Hercegovina, places for eating *ćevapi* and *burek* are everywhere. Any of the cafés on Jovan Dučić square or in the old town are a good bet for a decent espresso or cappuccino, as well as a nice traditional coffee.

Pizza Castello (☎ 223 192; Trg Travunije; meals 6.50-7.50KM; ☎ 7.30am-midnight) A cool terraced pizzeria on the square overlooked by the mosque. A wood-fired oven produces decent pizza, and the zing of the freshly squeezed lemonade is a great energy booster.

Getting There & Away

It's best to visit Trebinje with your own transport, since it is not terribly well connected. Buses go from the **bus station** (☎ 220 466) in the town centre (south); buses to Mostar go three times a day (15KM, four hours), and to Dubrovnik once a day, at 10am (5KM, 30 minutes). From Dubrovnik they go at 1.30pm every day except Sunday.

BOSNIA

TRAVNIK

☎ 030 / 27,500

This small town was once a seat for Turkish viziers (high officials), who would relax here on their plush cushions in the protective shade of the medieval castle and enjoy Travnik's fresh spring-water fish. Later, Travnik produced Bosnia and Hercegovina's Nobel prize-winning writer, Ivo Andrić, who probably wrote his first lyrical lines while gazing at this charming old town. When he became an established writer, Andrić once again turned his attention to his home town, and wrote *The Travnik Chronicles*, a novel in which Travnik is depicted as an international crossroads through the lives of a French and an Austrian ambassador living on the opposite sides of town.

A day trip to Travnik is a treat, and at 90km northwest of Sarajevo, it's easy to get to.

Orientation & Information

Travnik's main street, Bosanska, runs east-west. The **bus station** (☎ 792 761) is off Bosanska on the western end of town, within sight of the **post office** (☎ 547 102; Prnjavor), which can issue MasterCard advances. **Telecent@r** (☎ 518 850; Bosanska 120; per hr 1KM; ☎ 7am-11pm Mon-Sat, 9am-11pm Sun) has Internet access.

Sights

Protectively overlooking the town, the **medieval castle** (☎ 518 140; admission 2KM; ☎ 10am-6pm Apr-Nov) was built in the 15th century to hold the Turks at bay. It never had its moment of glory (or, more likely, failure), because the Bosnian state was already collapsing and its defenders surrendered. The Turks strengthened the fortifications and the castle remains largely intact today. To get here, turn left on Bosanska before the Many-Coloured Mosque, go through the underpass and then straight up the hill. Cross the high arched bridge over the river and enter via an iron gate. In the winter time it's normally locked, but the keys are held at the anthropological and archaeological **museum** (☎ 518 140; adult/concession 1.50/1KM; ☎ 9am-3pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat & Sun). The museum, on two floors off Bosanska, presents an eclectic collection of fossils, minerals, stuffed fauna, and artefacts from the Turkish period.

The museum also has the key, if needed, to the **Ivo Andrić museum** (☎ 518 140; Mustafa Kundić; admission 1.50KM; ☎ 9am-3pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat & Sun), upstairs from Restaurant Divan. This small museum claims to be the birthplace of the famed author and it even has a little room with a cot, where baby Andrić must have slept. An entire room is dedicated to various editions and translation of *The Travnik Chronicles*. You can also see pictures of the bespectacled author and his wife receiving his 1961 Nobel prize. Given Andrić's fame, it's most surprising that there's no street or building named after him in his home town. Town council, please take note!

At the eastern end of Bosanska is the gorgeous **Many-Coloured Mosque**. It, like all other mosques with any sense of self-worth, allegedly contains hairs from the Prophet Mohammed's beard. (This, like monasteries owning bits of St John the Baptist's hand, must be the clerical equivalent of Michelin stars.) Built in 1815 on the site of the

burnt-down 1757 original, it has an eastern rather than a western minaret and the exterior is painted with trees and grapes in lovely pale colours. The engraved wooden door is heavy and beautiful. Underneath the mosque is a small *bezistan* (old shopping bazaar).

Just east of the mosque is **Plava Voda** (Blue Water), where a rushing mountain stream is crossed by small stone bridges and where fat trout swim, waiting to be served up on someone's plate. This is a favourite summer spot for idling. A number of stalls sell touristy knick-knacks and there are a few restaurants.

Viziers' turbes (tombs) in the town reflect the importance of Travnik as the capital of Bosnia in the 18th and 19th centuries. There are a couple on Bosanska near the Hotel Lipa. Some corporate entity has thoughtfully put up explanatory boards, in English, which provide historical background to the town.

Sleeping & Eating

Hotel Lipa (☎ 511 604; Lažajeva 116; s/d 70/140KM) With the reception desk upholstered with stylish cow-skin patterned material, one wonders whether a lost designer once wandered into the Hotel Lipa. Mind you, that's pretty much it for style here, although the rooms are pretty decent with TVs and new bathrooms. Oh, and the TVs have cable and cable apparently has porn, if that'll lure you.

Pansion Oniks (☎ 512 182; Žitarnica bb; s/d 35/70KM) Behind the café of the same name near the Many-Coloured Mosque, Pansion Oniks is an OK option for a night's stay. Check out that town bypass under the window though, it might be noisy at night.

Restaurant Divan (☎ 818 141, 061 372 365; Mustafa Kundić; meals 8-10KM) Directly below the Ivo Andrić museum, Restaurant Divan is the most popular place in town. The usual Bosnian cuisine is served, and if you like meat, they guarantee theirs is always fresh and tender. And there's cherry pie which locals order by the baking tray to take home. Yes, it's that good. Use your chance to try *Travnički sir*, the famed local cheese made from sheep's milk.

Plava Voda (☎ 618 322; Šumeće 14; meals 4-7.50KM) A great place for escaping the summer heat by the stream and munching on tasty trout.

A nice salad and some cool white Hercegovinian wine go well with the fish.

Getting There & Away

Buses go almost hourly to Sarajevo (11KM, two hours), four go daily to Banja Luka (13KM, three hours) and six to Bihać (21KM, six hours).

JAJCE

☎ 030 / pop 30,000 (estimated)

The 'little egg' town is potentially one of Bosnia's most attractive places. It has a charging 21m waterfall right in the town centre; medieval Bosnian catacombs and church remains; a citadel lining an egg-shaped hill (responsible for Jajce's name); and a plush little hotel. You could pass a couple of days here as happy as Larry, especially if you squeeze in some swimming at the nearby Pliva Lake.

Unfortunately, the town is still being rebuilt following the damage it endured during the war. The main street was still in bandages at the time of research, and the restaurants that used to ply the punters with drink while they sighed over the majestic beauty of the waterfalls are all burnt down. Nevertheless, Jajce is a pretty place for a day or two's relaxing, or a day trip on the way to Banja Luka.

Orientation

Jajce is tiny. The bus station is just outside the town walls. To enter the town, pass through the medieval Travnik gate. On your left immediately after the gate is the stairway to the citadel (the citadel was closed to the public at the time of research). On the way up you will see the medieval catacombs and the remains of the medieval church. The waterfalls are on the right, before the Travnik gate, going through the little park. The town's 'exit gate' is the Banja Luka gate on the opposite side of Travnik gate.

Sights

Jajce was the place where medieval Bosnian kings were crowned, and where in 1943 during the second congress of Avnoy (Anti-fascist Council of the People's Liberation of Yugoslavia), Bosnia and Hercegovina got its stamp of acceptance into the Yugoslav pack. Tito and his mates probably climbed flasks and gazed at the gorgeous

waterfalls from a nearby cave, resting after making such a big decision. The **waterfalls**, of which there are two, are 21m and 18m long and mark the confluence of the Pliva and Vrbas Rivers. The cool air that rises from the smashing water is refreshing and you can see the waterfalls right from the place where the water drops into the abyss below, or if you feel queasy at the thought, there is a lovely spot on the opposite side, with a little balcony made especially for admiring the view.

Climbing the steps towards the **citadel** you'll come across the remains of the medieval **Church of St Luke**, the tower of which looks just like the one on Dubrovnik's main street, the Placa (Stradun). Next to it are the remains of tombs from the 3rd-century Roman temple dedicated to the god Mitras. Mithraism was a religion with strong similarities to Christianity that flourished in the first few centuries AD, and was the first successful monotheistic religion in the Roman Empire. Imported from Persia, it centred around the god Mitras, who created the world by killing a sacred bull.

A few metres from here are the fascinating **catacombs**. To get in, you must ring the house bell of a woman called Alida who lives in the house opposite and has a key. She charges 1KM and will take you inside and show you around. The catacombs, originally built around 1410 as a place of worship for followers of the Bosnian Church (see p92), are divided into two floors. The underground floor has a Bosnian Church altar characterised by a double cross, and surrounding it are shapes of a sickle moon and sun, symbolising pagan beliefs mixed with Christianity. The catacomb arches are lily-shaped, the emblem of Bosnian kings. The ground floor was intended to be a church but these plans were cut short when the Turks came to town. This mysterious location is said also to have been a place of worship for the Sultan Suleiman Pasha. The idea was to bury nobility here, but for some reason it never happened. The place was neglected and in a really bad shape after the war, but thanks to Alida, who even managed to squeeze money for lighting the place from the local authorities, the catacombs now (almost) get the care they deserve.

The 1KM fee also pays for entering the Bear Tower (Medvjed Kula), a watchtower

that got its name thanks to its mega-thick walls (strong as a bear). Again, before Alida took things in hand, the tower was a lovers' den. A bit like the citadel is now.

In the town centre, the Dizdar or Female Mosque, one of the most important in the region, was being reconstructed at the time of research. The Pliva Lake on the town's outskirts is a popular place for swimming.

Sleeping & Eating

There are two hotels in town which also serve food.

Hotel Stari Grad (☎ 654 006; Svetog Luke 3; s/d 80/120KM) Set in a traditional old Jajce house and restored by an absentee landlord, this small hotel has everything your heart could desire (well, almost). Spacious, clean and bright rooms with faux-vintage photos of old Jajce adorn the walls. The comfort extends to the Turkish bath and Finnish sauna downstairs. Snug bathrobes hang on the walls, waiting to give you more pleasure. During the hotel's restoration the builders found remains of an old Turkish bath that used to be just opposite the present one, and preserved it behind plexiglass, so the old bath is visible from the reception/restaurant area. The restaurant serves traditional Bosnian food and some Italian dishes, starting at 200KM.

Hotel Tourist (☎ 658 151; Kraljiće Katarine bb; s/d/tr 47/74/96KM) A large, formerly state-run hotel that has only half picked itself up since its near destruction in the '90s. Literally one half of the hotel is 'old rooms' and the other 'new rooms'. Needless to say, ask for a new room. They have good comfortable beds and nice new bathrooms. Plus the waterfalls are just around the corner.

Getting There & Away

There are four buses to/from Sarajevo (20KM, 3½ hours); and several go to Banja Luka (12KM, 1½ hours).

BANJA LUKA

☎ 051 / pop 200,000

Although never much of a tourist place, Banja Luka is a good stopover on the way to bigger and better things, like Zagreb or Belgrade. The town itself is full of greenery and wide streets for strolling. Since it's the capital of RS, it's a good place to see how things are going for the separatist Serbs.

A 1969 earthquake destroyed about 80% of the town and, as if that wasn't enough, in 1993 local Serbs updated the damage by blowing up all 16 of the city's mosques. The famous Ferhadija mosque (1580), originally built with the ransom money for an Austrian count, is due to be rebuilt but its site is still an empty plot.

Down by the emerald Vrbas River the large 16th-century castle is about the oldest thing around and is host to a summer festival of music, dance and theatre. Outside of town is an interesting ecotourist resort worth a visit if you're in Banja Luka.

Orientation

The main street is Kralja Petra I Karađorđevića (Kralja Petra), named after the great Serbian hero who led the first insurrection against the Turks, and it runs north-east to southwest. The Vrbas River takes much the same route but in a lazy, winding way. Parallel to Kralja Petra on the east side is Veselina Masleše, a strip of cafés and bars, plus stalls selling CDs, videos and the like. The castle is just south of the city centre.

The bus station and nearby train station are about 3km northeast of the centre and the airport is some 25km north.

Information

Only RS-issued phonecards work in Banja Luka so it's better to phone from the post office. There are plenty of ATMs, including one outside the post office.

Cambridge Center (☎ 221 730; Kralja Petra 103;

☎ 9am-9pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat) For English-language magazines and classic literature.

Post office (☎ 211 336; Kralja Petra 93; ☎ 7am-8pm Mon-Fri, 7am-6pm Sat) Telephones and MasterCard advances.

Raiffeisen Bank (☎ 222 224; Jevrejska bb;

☎ 8.30am-7.30pm Mon-Fri, 8am-2pm Sat) Has an all-card ATM and cashes travellers cheques.

Telegroup (☎ 213 388; Braće Mažar bb; per hr 2.50KM; ☎ 8am-11pm Mon-Sat, 10am-10pm Sun) Internet access.

Turistički Savež (☎ 212 323; tursavbl@eol.net; Kralja Petra 75; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Sat) This small office is somewhat difficult to find. It's down a side alley off Kralja Petra. It has maps and brochures and some staff speak a little English.

Zepter (☎ 211 100; Jevrejska bb; ☎ 8am-7pm Mon-Fri, to 1pm Sat) Will change KM to dinars for Serbia.

Sights

Banja Luka's parks and green streets are relaxing places to stroll with the seemingly

tireless locals who are outside day and night. The large **castle** dates back to the 16th century but has its origins in Roman times. On the banks of the Vrbas River, the green space in which the castle sits has restaurants overlooking the water. Wandering around the ancient castle, you'll come across the amphitheatre, overgrown with plants, whose benches were burned for fuel during the war. There is a towpath along the Vrbas bank for a nice little walk.

Some decent buildings line Kralja Petra street in the town centre. The **presidential palace**, the **Orthodox cathedral** and the **Republika Srpska Art Gallery** are among the most attractive. Chess maniacs might like to challenge the locals to a game on one of the big

chessboards painted on the pavement in Gradski Park, near the post office.

Sleeping

Hotel Bosna (☎ 215 775; info@hotelbosna.com; Kralja Petra 97; s/d old 67/104KM, new 102/144KM; **P**) This grand '70s hotel, right in the heart of things, has a new and an old part. The old bit has attractive dark brown décor and large retro room numbers on the doors. The new part is more fancy-schmancy, with comfortable, airy rooms. A big restaurant, bar and shops downstairs make sure you never leave.

Hotel Vidović (☎ 217 217; fax 211 100; Kozarska 85; s/d 70/81KM; **P**) The current location of this hotel is down a leafy road a few kilometres from the centre, but apparently

there are plans to move to the city centre. They promise to keep prices the same. The rooms are clean and fresh and the secure off-road parking makes this an attractive stop for motoring visitors.

Hotel Palas (☎ 218 723; Kralja Petra 60; www.inecco.net/palas-sm; s/d/tr from €41/66.70/76.90; **P**) Look up for the sign or you may be fooled by the pavement cafés that stretch in front of the hotel. Inside, in addition to 'home away from home' rooms, a sauna and fitness centre are available.

Hotel Camel (☎ 319 922; cnr Slobodana & Jovanovića; s/d/tr 68/81/94; **P**) If a 20-minute walk contributes to your fitness programme, stay here. The rooms are cosy, ochre-coloured, and have doormats with signs of the zodiac for you to wipe your tired feet on.

Eating & Drinking

Veselina Masleše, parallel to Kralja Petra but one block east, has a long strip of cafés, pastry shops and ice-cream vendors.

Restaurant Vrbas (☎ 464 608; Braće Potkornjaka 1; meals 6-11KM; ☎ 7am-11pm; **P**) Leafy plane trees with humongous trunks shade the terrace of this restaurant by the river's edge. While the Vrbas whooshes past and the waiters move at snail's pace, you can eat your hearty portion and relax.

Kod Muje (☎ 358 492; snacks 2-5KM; ☎ 7am-11pm) This is Bosnia central, with *ćevapi* and all manner of grilled meats at fantastically cheap prices. Kod Muje is a classic old-style eatery – a wooden cabin with a large terrace – and the owner's wife serves you caringly, as if she were your granny. Although it's in the centre, it can be hard to find. From Kralja Petra strike southeast. With the town hall on your left, cross Veselina Masleše and wander down the lane next to the cinema Kozara.

Master (☎ 317 444; Sime Šolajev 7; meals 8-12KM; ☎ 10am-midnight) A sleeping *ranchero* shaded by his sombrero gives this place away amid tower-block buildings. Locals like this place and are getting hooked on the enchiladas, fajitas and Coronas. Unfortunately, there are no *quesadillas* on the menu. A good, though not very authentic, alternative to the meaty Bosnian menus.

Orthodox Celts (☎ 467 700; Stevana Bulajića 12; ☎ 9am-1am) Put up a few posters of Ireland, pull some pints of Guinness, Kilkenny and Harp, and you've got yourself an Irish pub. This lively and often packed bar hides

beneath a suburban house. There's live music several times a week, but it's only rock and roll, no River Dancing. It's south of the Vrbas River, less than half a kilometre from the castle.

Getting There & Away

AIR

The airport, some 25km north of Banja Luka, has flights to Belgrade with JAT. The RS airline Air Srpska has been grounded for some time due to financial problems and is not showing signs of resurrection. A taxi to the airport should cost about 30KM.

BUS

From the **bus station** (☎ 315 865; Prote N. Kostića 38) there are three buses daily to Zagreb (23KM, seven hours), seven to Sarajevo (23KM, five hours) and hourly buses to Belgrade (23KM, seven hours). Four buses run to Bihać (11KM, three hours).

A taxi to the station should cost 5KM.

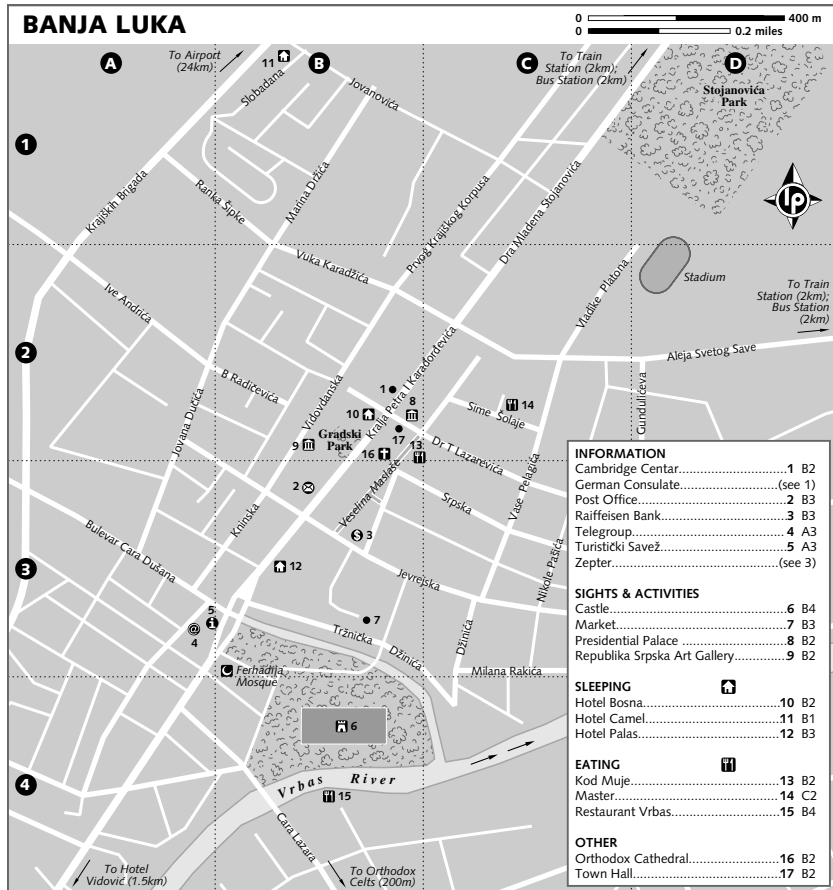
TRAIN

The **train station** (☎ 300 752; Srpskih Boraca 17) has some useful international connections to Belgrade, coastal Croatia and Zagreb (see p134).

Around Banja Luka

Eco-Centre Lončari (☎ 065 629 128; camping per adult/child/site 3/2/10KM) This is the only holiday resort of its kind in the country. The owner has turned acres of forest and a couple of fields into a place where people can come and put up their tents, barbecue, bathe in the swimming pool, fish in the ponds, and trek in the woods. Fishing is free with camping, but bring your own equipment. He has used only natural and sustainable materials – note the gorgeous sun umbrellas made of hay around the pool. There are plans to build a small hotel on the grounds. It's truly a little paradise.

It's a bit of a hassle to get here without your own transport. You can get a bus to Omarska from Banja Luka and then a taxi for the 15km to the centre. Check by telephoning (there is an English speaker) whether the promised bus service has been organised, which will pick you up from Omarska. If you are driving, follow the road to Omarska until you see the Eco-Centre Lončari signs (on wooden boards).



BIHAĆ

☎ 037 / pop 65,000

If you've come to Bosnia to check out those promises of adrenaline-fuelled adventure, Bihać is the top place. Its reputation as a rafting capital is well deserved and it owes it all to its sapphire-coloured Una River. Try your hand at the whirls, and you're guaranteed tons of fun. Not for the faint-hearted.

Orientation

The usual approach is from Novi Grad on the Croatian border following the Una River southwest through an impressive limestone gorge. The Una River cleaves the town in two, with the town centre on the western side and some expensive hotels and restaurants on the east bank. On this side Bihackih Branilaca leads out of town northwards to Novi Grad, and south, past the bus station on Put V Korpusa, to Sarajevo.

Information

Center (Put V Korpusa 5; per hr 2KM) Internet access.

Post office (☎ 332 332; Bosanska bb; ☎ 7am-9pm Mon-Sat, 9am-noon Sun) Poste-restante facilities, MasterCard cash advances.

Raiffeisen Bank (☎ 329 000; Dana Državnosti 5; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, to 2pm Sat) Cashes travellers cheques and has an ATM that accepts all cards.

Telephone office (☎ 310 055; Bosanska 3; ☎ 7am-9pm Mon-Sat, 9am-noon Sun) Opposite the post office.

Tourist office (☎ 222 777; Dr Irfana Ljubijankića 13; ☎ 8am-4pm Mon-Fri) A clued-up organisation with its finger on river activities and accommodation possibilities.

Sights

The lofty, stone **captain's tower** on the western side of the river dates from the early 16th century. It was a prison from 1878 to 1959 but now holds a nifty multilevel **museum** (☎ 223 214; admission 1KM; ☎ 9am-4pm Mon-Fri, to 2pm Sat) featuring sarcophagi from the Bihać area and the history of the town.

Behind the tower are the remains of the **Church of St Anthony** that was destroyed in WWII. The original St Anthony is now the **Fethya Mosque**, and although not exactly Hagia Sofia, it's worth a look. The church was converted into a mosque by the Turks in the 1530s. At the end of the 17th century the Croats ousted the Turks and built a new St Anthony's. It was never completely finished and war damage has left just a bell tower.

WARNING

Be very aware that the Bihać area was mined during the war. Stick to paths and concreted areas.

Adjacent is a Muslim *turbe* containing the bodies of two martyrs.

Activities

The rafting season usually runs from March to October and the river is higher in spring and autumn. The two main outfits who provide water thrills need about six people to run a trip, but it's always possible to join up with another group. Prices depend upon the length and complexity of the trip. There are two types of rafting experiences: 'extreme' (ie very scary) and 'light' (ie no need to bring a clean pair of pants). The 'extreme' is a four-hour ordeal covering 15km and costs 70KM, and 'light', which suits all ages, is a 10km stretch and costs between 40KM and 50KM. Add between €5 and €15 to that for a postrafting picnic.

Both owners will collect by arrangement from the bus station.

Based at Golubić, 6km from Bihać, **Una Kiro Rafting** (☎/fax 223 760, 061-192 338; www.una-kiro-rafting.com; Muse Gazima Čatića 1) also offers kayak lessons, equipment and accommodation. Camping is available from €5 per person and there's a free kayak for just messing around in.

Una Rafting (Sport Bjeli; ☎ 223 502, 061 138 853; www.unarafting.com; Klokot, Pecikovići bb), based about 12km from Bihać, offers rafting, kayaking and mountain biking plus accommodation.

For information on fishing, ask at the tourist office.

Sleeping

There's a range of accommodation with the rafting outfits providing camping or basic accommodation, some good *pansions*, and some expensive hotels down on the river which are not worth a look. If the following are full ask the tourist office for some alternatives.

Villa Una (☎/fax 311 393; Bihackih Branilaca 20; s/d 50/70KM; ☎) It's central, it's near the river and it's good value for money. What else could you ask for? This is a pristine private home with well-equipped rooms.

Hotel Park (☎ 332 553; fax 331 883; Put V Korpusa bb; s/d unrestored 44/88KM, restored 54/98KM; ☎) This is the town's big hotel and probably the best bet for value, especially if you go for the unrestored rooms, which are perfectly adequate.

MB Lipovača (☎ 351 620; Dr Irfana Ljubijankića 91; s 32-45KM, d/tr 80/120KM; ☎) A 2km walk from town, the hotel is well equipped with pleasant rooms, although the cheaper singles are without TV. Catch up on all that holiday reading.

Hut Aduna (☎ 314 304; Put V Korpusa bb; per person 5KM; ☎) Perfect for your wholesome sporty rafting experience: an under-the-trees camping ground, about 5km out of town between the Una River and the Sunce Hotel. Sites are powered and there's a toilet and shower block.

Eating & Drinking

Sunce (☎ 310 487; Put V Korpusa bb; meals 8-15KM; ☎ 8am-11pm) Try the house speciality, Plata Una, a large plate with various dips and snacks (30KM for two) – very filling. Or you can always go for the trout. The restaurant is large and likes its well-heeled clientele. There are lovely views of the river, islets and an old mill from the big windows.

River Una (☎ 310 014; Džemala Bijedića 12; meals 10-15KM; ☎ 7am-11pm) Another riverside restaurant, with the water at your feet. Recommended are the seafood dishes, but the freshest is always (you guessed it) the trout.

Meno (☎ 311 511; Bihackih Branilaca 35; pizzas 5-10KM; ☎ 8am-11pm) Choose any size or topping for your pizza, but choose carefully – you don't want that crispy base getting soggy. This is Bihać's pizza mecca. You can also take away.

Express (☎ 332 380; Bosanska 5; meals 3-5KM; ☎ 7am-10pm) Express by name, express by nature. Choose, point and eat well at this cafeteria near the post office. Choices are hot meals, salads, cakes and drinks.

Samoposluga (☎ 312 601; Bihackih Branilaca bb; ☎ 7.30am-10pm Mon-Sat, 8am-3pm Sun) A sizeable supermarket next to Villa Una that should cater to your feed-yourself requirements.

Tasun (Bihackih Branilaca bb; ☎ 24hr) If all that rafting has left you yearning for more activity, get yourself down to the town's party location. The music is varied, the punters happy and on weekends, they go on for hours.

Getting There & Away

Bihać is best reached via Banja Luka. Services from the **bus station** (☎ 350 676; Put V Korpusa bb) are somewhat limited with two buses daily to Banja Luka (11KM, three hours), three to Sarajevo (28KM, six hours) and five daily to Zagreb (21KM, 2½ hours).

Trains are still very infrequent and only within the area of Bihać, as much repair work still needs to be done to the infrastructure.

BOSNIA & HERCEGOVINA DIRECTORY

PRACTICALITIES

- *Oslobođenje* and *Dnevni avaz* are the most popular daily newspapers in Sarajevo; *Dani* is a reliable independent weekly. *Nezavisne novine* is a Banja Luka daily.
- Most public radio and TV stations are operated by the Bosnian Muslim-Croat and Serb entities; a national public broadcasting service is being developed.
- Bosnia and Herzegovina uses standard European electricity (220V to 240V/50HZ to 60HZ).
- The system used for measurements and weights is metric.

ACCOMMODATION

Prices quoted for the summer months are for July to September. Winter prices relate to the ski season, which generally is December to February.

Private accommodation is easy to arrange in Sarajevo and is also possible in Mostar. Elsewhere, ask the local people at markets or shops. Staying in a home is not only cheaper, but also usually very pleasant. As likely as not, your hosts will ply you with coffee, pull out old pictures of Tito (depending on their politics), and regale you with many tales of old Yugoslavia's glorious past.

Sarajevo is well set up for budget accommodation, and as more visitors go to Mostar cheaper accommodation will become more available. Most towns will have *pansions*

that are generally slightly humbler than the hotels and more personable through direct contact with the owner. Hotels are everywhere. Some have not changed since the days of their state ownership while some have been privatised and modernised.

Unless otherwise mentioned, breakfast is not included with private accommodation but is for *pansions* and hotels. Also unless stated, all rooms have private bathroom. Most hotels and all but the cheapest *pansions* will have cable TV. Laundrettes have yet to debut in Bosnia and Hercegovina, but *pansions* and hotels will usually do laundry if asked. Prices vary dramatically; expect about 10KM to 20KM a load. Sarajevo has dry-cleaning facilities.

ACTIVITIES

Outdoor activities such as hiking and camping are severely compromised by the presence of mines. However, Jahorina and Bjelašnica, Bosnia and Hercegovina's ski resorts, are again open.

The rafting season runs from March to October. The Una River near Bihać is particularly popular.

Green Visions (Map p97; ☎/fax 033-207 169; www.greenvisions.ba; Terezija bb) is a Sarajevo ecotourism agency popular with expat workers that runs outdoors trips.

BOOKS

Zoë Brân's *After Yugoslavia*, part of the Lonely Planet Journeys series, follows the author's travels through the former Yugoslavia in the aftermath of the collapse, reflecting on her earlier journey to the region in 1978.

While Rebecca West's mammoth *Black Lamb & Grey Falcon* (published 1941) remains a classic piece of travel writing, its 1937 ending is of no use for understanding what happened next. Noel Malcolm's *Bosnia: A Short History* is a good country-specific complement that brings history more up to date. Misha Glenny's *The Balkans, Nationalism, War, and the Great Powers, 1804–1999*, has some telling pages on the background to the recent war. *Balkan Babel* by Sabrina Ramet is an engaging look at Yugoslavia from Tito to Milošević.

BUSINESS HOURS

Official hours are 8am to 4pm Monday to Friday; banks open Saturday mornings.

Shops are open longer hours (usually from 8am to 6pm), and many open on Sunday. Restaurants are generally open from 11am to midnight Monday to Saturday, and noon to 7pm Sunday. Drinking venues stay open till midnight and clubs operate from 9pm to 2am.

CUSTOMS

Removing your shoes is usual in most households; the host will provide slippers. When greeting acquaintances in Sarajevo or elsewhere in the Federation, it is customary to plant one kiss on each cheek. In the RS, three kisses is the norm.

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Bosnia and Hercegovina's greatest danger is that some areas are heavily mined; see p87. Nationalism runs strong in some parts of the country (notably the RS and Croat areas to the south and west), but this should not affect international travellers, who can expect a warm welcome almost everywhere.

DISABLED TRAVELLERS

There has been a concerted effort to make things easier for travellers with disabilities, especially those who use wheelchairs. This is partly in response to those who have been disabled through war and also through rebuilding to Western standards. Smaller hotels won't have lifts. Disabled toilets are still very rare.

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

Bosnian Embassies & Consulates

Bosnia and Hercegovina has embassies and/or consulates in the following countries; the website www.mvp.gov.ba contains further listings.

Australia Canberra (☎ 02-6232 4646; fax 02-6232 5554; 6 Beale Crescent, Deakin, ACT 2600)

Canada Ottawa (☎ 613-236 0028; fax 613-236 1139; 130 Albert St, Suite 805, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5G4)

Croatia Zagreb (☎ 01-48 19 420; fax 01-48 19 418; Pavla Hatzja 3, PP27, 10001 Zagreb)

France Paris (☎ 01 42 67 34 22; fax 01 40 53 85 22; 174 Rue de Courcelles, 75017 Paris)

Germany Berlin (☎ 030-814 712 33/5; fax 030-814 712; 31 Ibsenstrasse 14, D-10439); Bonn (☎ 0228-35 00 60; fax 0228-35 00 69; Friedrich-Wilhelm strasse 2, 53113);

Munich (☎ 089-982 80 64/5; fax 089-982 80 79; Montsalvat strasse 19, 80804 Munich)

Netherlands The Hague (☎ 070-358 85 05; fax 070-358 43 67; Bezuidenhoutseweg 223, 2594 AL Den Haag)

Slovenia Ljubljana (☎ 01-432 40 42; fax 01-432 22 30; Kolarjeva 26, 1000 Ljubljana)

UK London (☎ 020-7373 0867; 5-7 Lexham Gardens, London W1R 3BF)

USA New York (☎ 212-593 1042; fax 212-751 9019; 866 UN Plaza, Suite 580, New York, NY 10017); Washington DC (☎ 202-337 1500; fax 202-337 1502; 2109 E St NW, Washington, DC 20037)

Embassies & Consulates in Bosnia & Hercegovina

The nearest embassies for Australia, Ireland and New Zealand are found in Belgrade, Ljubljana and Rome respectively. The following countries have representation in Sarajevo (area code 033):

Austria (Map p97; ☎ 279 400; fax 668 339; Džidžikovac 7)

Bulgaria (☎ 668 191; possar@bih.net.ba; Soukbnar 5)

Canada (Map p97; ☎ 222 033; fax 222 004; Grbavička 4/2)

Croatia (Map p97; ☎ 444 331; fax 472 434; Mehmed-bega 16)

France (Map p97; ☎ 668 151; fax 212 186; Mehmed-bega K. Lj 18)

Germany (Map p97; ☎ 275 000; fax 652 978; Mejtaš Buka 11-13)

Japan (Map pp100-1; ☎ 209 580; fax 209 583; M.M.Bašeskije 2)

Netherlands (Map p97; ☎ 223 404; fax 223 413; Grbavička 4/1)

Serbia and Montenegro (Map p97; ☎ 260 080; fax 221 469; Obala Maka Dizdara 3a)

Slovenia (Map p97; ☎ 271 260; fax 271 270; Bentbaša 7)

UK (Map p97; ☎ 444 429; britemb@bih.net.ba; Tina Ujević 8)

USA (Map p97; ☎ 445 700; opabih@pd.state.gov; Alipašina 43)

Germany also has representation in **Banja Luka** (☎ 051-277 949; fax 051-217 113; Kralja Petra I Karađorđevića 103, Banja Luka).

GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS

Homosexuality is not at all well regarded in Bosnia and Hercegovina, although Sarajevo and Mostar are more tolerant. Homosexuality is legal and the age of consent is 16. There are no public organisations for contact.

HOLIDAYS

Bajram, a twice-yearly Muslim holiday (December and October, see p392 for precise

dates), is observed in parts of the Federation. Easter and Christmas are observed but Orthodox and Catholic dates may not coincide.

New Year's Day 1 January

Independence Day 1 March

May Day 1 May

National Statehood Day 25 November

INTERNET RESOURCES

Bosnia and Hercegovina's natural and cultural wonders are talked up at www.bh.tourism.ba, which is administered by the Office of the High Representative, itself a good source of news – see www.ohr.int. The website www.insidebosnia.com has news on events and other interesting links. The government website www.mvp.gov.ba gives details on embassies and visas.

LANGUAGE

Notwithstanding different dialects, the people of Bosnia and Hercegovina basically speak the same language. However, that language is referred to as 'Bosnian' in the Muslim parts of the Federation, 'Croatian' in Croat-controlled parts and 'Serbian' in the RS. The Federation uses the Latin alphabet; the RS uses Cyrillic. See the Croatian & Serbian section of the Language chapter (p414).

MAPS

Freytag & Berndt produces a good 1:250,000 road map of Bosnia and Hercegovina. Maps of Mostar, Sarajevo and Banja Luka are readily available from bookshops, kiosks or tourist information centres.

MONEY

The euro is the shadow currency. The convertible mark (KM), Bosnia's currency, is tied to the euro at a rate of 1KM to €0.51129. Many establishments (especially hotels) accept euros (notes only) and sometimes also list their prices in euros. Prices in this chapter conform to quotes of individual businesses.

ATMs are all over the place with MasterCard, Visa and their offshoots being accepted. Visa, MasterCard and Diners Club are readily accepted by larger establishments all over the country.

When changing money, it's best to ask for small bills as shops often are hard-pressed

for change. Travellers cheques can be readily changed at Raiffeisen and Zagrebačka Banks, one or both of which have branches in the places mentioned in this chapter.

PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEO

Photographing military installations (including airports, bridges, checkpoints, troops and bases) and embassies is forbidden. If in doubt, ask before taking any photographs.

POST

Post and telephone offices are usually combined. Poste-restante service is available at all cities included in this book; letters should be addressed to: (Name), Poste Restante, (postcode), Bosnia and Hercegovina.

Postcodes are: Travnik 72270, Banja Luka 78101, Bihać 77000, Međugorje 88266, Mostar 88000. A fee is usually charged when the mail is picked up.

TELEPHONE & FAX

Phonecards, for local or short international calls at public phones, can be purchased at post offices or from street kiosks for 2KM or 5KM.

There's a button labelled 'language' to give you instructions in English. Unfortunately, cards issued in the Serbian, Croatian or Bosnian parts of the country are not interchangeable.

It's cheaper to use the telephone section of post offices for longer calls. Calls to Australia/Britain/North America cost 2.09/1.05/1.05KM. One page of fax to the same destinations costs the same.

Dial ☎ 1201 for the international operator and ☎ 1188 if you need local directory information.

Telephone numbers mentioned in this chapter starting with 061 and 063 are for mobile phones within the Federation and 065 is the mobile code in RS.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

- Fire ☎ 123
- Medical emergency ☎ 124
- Police ☎ 122
- Roadside emergency ☎ 1282/1288

TOURIST INFORMATION

Bosnia's larger cities, including Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Mostar, Bihać and Međugorje, all have tourist offices. The underemployed staff are generally delighted to see travellers and will dispense maps, brochures and advice.

VISAS

Citizens of the EU and the following countries do not require a visa: Andorra, Australia, Brunei, Canada, Croatia, Japan, Kuwait, Liechtenstein, Macedonia, Malaysia, Monaco, New Zealand, Norway, Qatar, Russia, San Marino, Serbia and Montenegro, Switzerland, the Vatican, Turkey and the USA.

Citizens of all other countries must apply for a visa; forms can be obtained from Bosnia and Hercegovina consular offices. An application for a private visit visa must be accompanied by a letter of invitation from a citizen of the country, while a tourist visa application must be accompanied by a voucher from the tourist agency organising the visit.

The cost of a single entry visa is €31, a multiple-entry visa for up to 90 days €57, and a multiple-entry visa for over 90 days €72. One photograph needs to accompany the application. For a full list and application requirements check the government website www.mvp.gov.ba.

TRANSPORT IN BOSNIA & HERCEGOVINA

This section deals with travel into or out of Bosnia and Hercegovina, and includes general getting around advice and information. For details of travel within the Western Balkans, see the Transport chapter.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Air

Bosnia and Hercegovina's main airport is at Sarajevo; Mostar has an airport but only receives charter flights. The country's other airport is that of Banja Luka in the RS. The airline Air Srpska was not flying at the time of research due to financial reasons.

Bosnia and Hercegovina is served by a few European airlines such as Austrian Airlines, Alitalia, Lufthansa and Adria Airways,

which pick up at intercontinental hubs like London, Milan, Frankfurt and Vienna. No discount airlines fly into Bosnia and Hercegovina but cheap flights to Dubrovnik in Croatia and a bus trip into the country would be worth investigating.

JAT serves **Banja Luka airport** (☎ 051-835 210). The following airlines (Sarajevo phone numbers, are code 033) serve **Sarajevo airport** (☎ 289 100; www.sarajevo-airport.ba):

Adria Airways (airline code JP; ☎ 232 125; www.adria-airways.com; hub Ljubljana)

Austrian Airlines (airline code OS; ☎ 202 059; www.aau.com; hub Vienna)

Croatia Airlines (airline code OU; ☎ 666 123; www.croatiaairlines.hr; hub Zagreb)

JAT (airline code JU; ☎ 259 750; www.jat.com; hub Belgrade)

Lufthansa (code LH; ☎ 278 590; www.lufthansa.com; hub Frankfurt)

Malév Hungarian Airlines (airline code MA; ☎ 473 200; www.malev.hu; hub Budapest)

Scandjet (airline code FLY; ☎ 266 430; www.scandjet.se; hub Gothenburg)

Swiss International Air Lines (airline code LX; ☎ 208 971; www.swiss.com; hub Zurich)

Turkish Airlines (airline code TK; ☎ 666 092; www.turkishairlines.com; hub Istanbul)

Land

A return ticket is cheaper than two single tickets.

BORDER CROSSINGS

There are no problems in crossing any of the borders that Bosnia and Hercegovina shares with Croatia, and Serbia and Montenegro.

If you're travelling by bus, wait inside; a border guard will get on board and check your passport. Sometimes the driver will collect all the passports on board and take them outside to show them to the guards. Don't panic, this is normal. If you are using the train to travel via Croatia (to Budapest, etc), the same procedures apply.

If you are driving, the crossings are usually simply a matter of queuing and showing your passport and car documents.

Croatia

There are several border crossings into Croatia from Bosnia and Hercegovina, but the fastest and least hassle is the crossing at Metković. This is the one that will be used on most bus journeys from the coast

to Mostar or Sarajevo. The points of crossing are: Metković Doljani, Neum, Ivanica, Imotski, Slavonski Brod, Prnjavor, Orašje.

Serbia & Montenegro

If you are coming into Bosnia and Hercegovina from Serbia or Montenegro, make sure you have your police registration documents (your hotel/host is supposed to supply you with these) stating where you have been staying while in the country, as the Serbian & Montenegrin authorities will ask for them and can get slightly tiresome if you can't produce them. (This is not necessary in Bosnia and Hercegovina.) The points of crossing are: Sitnica, Višegrad, Zvornik, Šćepan Polje.

BUS

Well-established bus routes link Bosnia and Hercegovina with its neighbours and Western Europe.

Međugorje, Mostar, Sarajevo and Bihać have bus connections with Split and Dubrovnik on the coast and Zagreb in Croatia.

Sarajevo and Banja Luka have services to Belgrade and Podgorica in Serbia and Montenegro.

Sample routes to Western Europe from Sarajevo are Munich (€54, 16 hours, daily), Amsterdam (€125, 32 hours, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday) and Brussels (€105, 27 hours, Tuesday and Saturday).

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Drivers need to ensure that they have Green Card insurance for their vehicle and an International Driving Permit. Fuel is readily available in towns but it's sensible not to get too low, especially at night when stations may be closed. Spares for European-made cars should be readily available and there'll be mechanics in all largish towns.

TRAIN

A daily service connects Ploče (on the Croatian coast) and Zagreb (Croatia) via Mostar, Sarajevo and Banja Luka; another connects Ploče and Sarajevo via Mostar.

Ploče	Mostar	Sarajevo	Banja Luka	Zagreb
5.47am	7.10am	9.34am	3.36pm	7.46pm
10.18am	8.56am	6.41am		
3.50pm	5.20pm	7.39pm		
11.02pm	9.40pm	7.21pm	1.04pm	8.57am

An overnight train runs from Sarajevo to Budapest (€45/65 in 1st/2nd class, 11 hours, 10.25pm). Another overnight train runs from Banja Luka to Belgrade (22.50KM, nine hours, 9.15pm).

GETTING AROUND

Air

Air Srpska and Air Bosna were the only domestic airlines, but due to financial problems they no longer operate. There may be future efforts to resuscitate them.

Bicycle

Only adventurous foreigners cycle out into the countryside, where the roads can be very hilly. Do not venture off established concrete or asphalt surfaces because of the risk of mines. There is a core of cyclists in Sarajevo but, again, they tend to be foreigners.

Bus

Bosnia and Hercegovina's bus network is comprehensive and reliable although some buses verge on the decrepit. Some services between distant towns may be limited. As in other matters the Federation and RS run separate services.

Stowing luggage usually costs up to 2KM per item, depending on the route. Buses usually run on time, although they are slow due to winding roads and occasional stops for drivers and passengers to eat and smoke.

COSTS

Sample fares are 11KM Mostar to Sarajevo, 9KM Sarajevo to Travnik and 11KM from Banja Luka to Bihać.

RESERVATIONS

Reservations aren't really necessary except on international buses or on infrequent long-distance services during holiday times.

Car & Motorcycle

Narrow roads, hills and bends, although through beautiful countryside, make for slow progress by car but for some challenging motorcycling. Kamikaze drivers

pass even on the sharpest of curves. Keep well behind them.

AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATIONS

Automobile Association of Bosnia & Hercegovina (Map p97; ☎ 033-212 771; www.bihamk.ba; Skenderija 23, 71000 Sarajevo) offers road assistance and towing services for members. A membership costs 35KM per year.

HIRE

Many car-hire places have sprung up, particularly in Sarajevo. Car hire is also available in Banja Luka, Mostar and Međugorje. Prices usually start at €43/€240 for one day/week with unlimited mileage.

Car-hire firms in the Federation do not operate in RS and vice versa.

You'll need a deposit, usually in the form of a credit-card slip, your International Driving Permit and your passport (they'll take a photocopy).

Check the car in the presence of the hirer for existing damage and nonfunctioning items.

ROAD RULES

Driving is on the right, seat belts must be worn and the tolerated level of alcohol in the blood is .05. Speed limits are 60km/h for urban roads and 80km/h for rural roads.

Local Transport

TAXI

Taxis are readily available and cheap, though outside Sarajevo and Banja Luka they may not have (or turn on) meters. If there is no meter, agree on the price before you set off.

Train

There are far fewer trains than buses and they don't necessarily connect with where visitors might go. However, they're more comfortable, there's more to see from them and they can be used as an alternative to the bus for transport between Banja Luka, Sarajevo and Mostar. About 10 daily trains chug out of Sarajevo to minor destinations. Trains from Banja Luka travel locally within the RS.

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