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TRIP DETAILS

8 days ~ Bosnia & Herzegovina

6 days moderate to strenuous
hiking on varied terrain,

7 nights hotels

2012 DATES

Sep 3–10

2012 LAND COST

\$2,995 per person
(12-30 climbers)

\$400 single supplement



© Anne Wood (Mountain Travel Sobek guide)

2012 'Summit for Danny' BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA

**Climb Mount Maglic, Bosnia's Highest Peak, in Support of
the Daniel Bryant Youth & Family Treatment Center**

TRIP LEVEL
MODERATE TO STRENUOUS

HIGHLIGHTS

- Explore Bosnia's Sarajevo, the crossroads of ancient civilizations and the center of old Ottoman life
- Enjoy breathtaking views from the highest peak in Bosnia & Herzegovina – A real achievement!
- Hike in the great limestone Dinaric Alps—undiscovered by tourists
- Visit the traditional village of Lukomir, where residents still live "the old way"

Revised April 14, 2011 aw



2012 'SUMMIT FOR DANNY' – BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA

**Climb Mount Maglic, Bosnia's Highest Peak, in Support of the
Daniel Bryant Youth & Family Treatment Center**

It's rare to find a region that offers such diverse beauty and harmony and yet is so rarely traveled as the Dinaric Alps, a range of stunning limestone peaks harboring lush valleys, primeval forests, clear rivers, and pristine lakes. Running through Bosnia and Herzegovina, an independent country of the former Yugoslavia, this range parallels to the rugged east coast of the Adriatic Sea.

On this special trip, you will see some of Europe's most spectacular landscapes, and you will experience its fascinating culture, off-limits for years due to the political turmoil of this once war-torn region. After a day in the capital city of Sarajevo, you'll begin hiking in Bosnia and Herzegovina, following rugged trails through pristine conifer forests, visiting emerald-green lakes, and touring Sutjeska National Park. There, you can embark on a demanding but rewarding climb up to the tippy top of 7,828-foot Maglic, Bosnia's highest peak, or simply watch from the pristine sparkling lakes below.

Mountain Travel Sobek is proud to have pioneered Bosnia and Herzegovina as an emerging adventure travel destination for North Americans. After MTS Program Director, Anne Wood, scouted this area in person with our local guides in 2007, we sent out very first exploratory trip the same year. That departure was the first American adventure travel group to visit since the Balkan conflict—a gap of more than 20 years. Since then, we have sent 2-3 departures to Bosnia each year.

Here are some quotes from MTS travelers who have returned from our trip in Bosnia:

"The glimpse into life that seemed in some ways, unchanged from medieval times was intriguing. The scenery was breathtaking and the people we encountered were authentic, curious and receptive to our presence. It proved to be a joyful experience on many levels."

"The trip delivers on all the essentials for a successful hiking adventure: scenery, challenge and cultural exposure."

"The guides were wonderful at sharing their knowledge of local history and culture, which really adds to the trip. The hikes were excellent and varied, and Sarajevo was fascinating."

"It is one of the best trips I have ever done, and I hope to go back someday."

"Beautiful scenery, excellent hiking, interesting history. The guides were superb."

"A fantastic trip. It was a wonderful combination of expert guiding through spectacular mountain scenery that was culturally enriching as well."

"The guides are not only well trained but also enthusiastic, personable, helpful, knowledgeable about the culture, history, environment, safety and absolutely everything."

"The mountain views were spectacular. We never saw another hiker."

"We really enjoyed the local food."

"Beautiful scenery. I really enjoyed learning more about the history, and spending time with the local people."

"The location is an amazing mix of history and scenery. The cultural elements are rich, given the constant back and forth of powers ruling over the Balkans. The terrain makes each hike different and stunning. It is a perfect combination for exploring."

"The guides had a great sense of humor, and had excellent rapport not only with our group but with everyone we came in contact with. They were also very knowledgeable about the country itself, the trails and hiking in general. I never once worried about a thing."

"The trip was excellent. I thoroughly enjoyed hiking through gorgeous countryside while learning about the history from first-hand witnesses (our guides). Our guides were very attentive."

"We were given a superb experience by our guides who had a strong but unbiased understanding of the recent history of the region together with a fantastic knowledge of the mountains where we trekked. Very few people understand the complex history of the Balkans which became much clearer to us during our trip. MTS style adventure travel can do a great deal to assist international understanding especially of the much misunderstood Moslem world."

"The glimpse into life that seemed in some ways, unchanged from medieval times was intriguing. The scenery was breathtaking and the people we encountered were authentic, curious and receptive to our presence. It proved to be a joyful experience on many levels."

So – Rather than following other groups along the well-worn trails of Western Europe, be among the first travelers to the spectacular peaks and sprawling wilderness of Bosnia and Herzegovina!



ITINERARY

☞ This epic adventure begins with a rendezvous at the airport in Sarajevo, Bosnia on *September 3, 2012*. You should plan on arriving in the morning on this day.

DAY 1, September 3 ~ Arrival and Sarajevo City Tour

Arrive in Sarajevo, Bosnia. Your trip leader will meet you outside of the customs and immigration area at the airport. He will then answer all of your questions, brief you on the immediate arrangements, and escort you to our hotel.

Bosnia has a lengthy, tumultuous history. One of the most oriental and culturally diverse cities in Europe, Sarajevo spent over 300 years under Turkish governorship until the Austro-Hungarians arrived in the late nineteenth century. Fifty years later, the empire collapsed when Archduke Ferdinand was assassinated here, hastening the outbreak of the First World War.



In the late twentieth century, Sarajevo hosted the Winter Olympics (1984), only to crumble once again a few years later in a 4-year siege by Serb forces amidst the break-up of the former Yugoslavia.

Our tour of the major historical, cultural and war sites in the city will help you to piece together its complex and fascinating history. Sites we will see include:

- Sarajevo's ancient old town, and medieval beginnings
- The historic Old Towne Hall (National Library) - 1896
- The Alifakovac Cemetery - 1550
- Kazandziluk Street – and the old coppersmiths at work
- Bascarsija (the Old Towne's Main Square)
- The old historic Orthodox Church - 1539
- The old historic Synagogue - 1581
- A 19th Century Roman Catholic Cathedral - 1889
- The Svrzina House (a Turkish Style house of a well-known Muslim family, and a wonderful opportunity to have a coffee or tea)
- The guided story of Gazi Husref Bey (the founding of a city)
- The Latin Bridge – the place of King Ferdinand's assassination – June 28, 1914

After our short walk, we'll have dinner in Bascarsija, the city's beautiful old bazaar dating from the Ottoman period.

D...Hotel Europe, Sarajevo

DAY 2, September 4 ~ War Tunnel and Igman War Route Hike

After breakfast, we'll set off to pay a visit to the famous Sarajevo War Tunnel. The tunnel provided the citizens of Sarajevo with a life line during the 1,400-day siege of Sarajevo (1992-1996), a period of total isolation from the outside world. After Bosnia and Herzegovina had declared independence from Yugoslavia, the Serbs, whose strategic goal was to create a new Serbian State of Republika Srpska that would include part of the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, encircled Sarajevo with a siege force of 18,000 soldiers stationed in the surrounding hills, from which they assaulted the city with weapons that included artillery, mortars, tanks, anti-aircraft guns, heavy machine-guns, multiple rocket launchers, rocket-launched aircraft bombs, and sniper rifles. From May 2, 1992, the Serbs completely blockaded the city. The Bosnian government defense forces inside the besieged city were poorly equipped and unable to break the siege. The tunnel was the only "reliable" road in of goods and electricity into Sarajevo.

From the tunnel we will retrace by foot the walk many Sarajevans had to endure to freedom. This 4-hour initially steep hike through beech and spruce forests is a true pilgrimage. We slowly rise above the Sarajevo basin and make our way through thick forests with the occasional remnants of a field hospital, lone mountain mosque, and several mountain huts before we find ourselves in Igman, the home to the 1984 Olympic cross country skiing event.

B,L,D...Hotel Feri, Igman

NOTE: Our Guides are all fully trained to lead Mountain Travel Sobek groups, and are originally from Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Guide Samer Hajric lived through the Siege of Sarajevo. Sarajevo continues to be his home to this day. He is a Certified mountain guide by Mountaineering Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina and UIAA standards (Official International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation, partner of International Olympic Committee), and has a degree in Sociology. He has been guiding this trip for MTS since 2007.

DAY 3, September 5 ~ Lukomir Highland Village

Today we'll enjoy a full day of walking in the Bjelasnica Mountains (home of the 1984 winter Olympics), ascending Obalj Peak (6,218') and visiting the absolutely amazing village of Lukomir, Bosnia and Herzegovina's highest village (4,818'). After a short 30-minute transfer, we'll start from the traditional style Bosnian Mosque in the village of Umoljani. Our walk will take us to Gradina, a summer village perched high above Umoljani. Chances are we will see many villagers around and about collecting their summer harvest. Unlike Umoljani, the village was not destroyed during the war and still has some excellent examples of traditional Bjelasnica summer village architecture.

From here we will start ascending toward the Obalj ridge, and slowly we will rise above Studeni Potok. The views will start to open in front of us. The Treskavica and Visocica Mountains will offer us fantastic and breathtaking views. Once at the ridge of Obalj, we'll slowly continue along the ridge, which is very wide (so no fear for anybody!).

From the peak we'll see Lukomir Village below us, to which we will descend. Lukomir is known for its ancient stecci (medieval tombstones), and is a place where villagers stick to the "old way" of doing things. Traditional dress, the occasional turban and fez, are still worn and go hand in hand with the more contemporary bliss of everyday life, electricity and running water. On the edge of the village we'll be treated by a rare view of Rakitnica, Obalj and Visocica. You have arrived at the end of the world.

From Lukomir, we'll traverse along Obalj's side to the 131-foot Peruce Waterfall. All the while, you will be treated by sweet and cool breezes coming off of Visocica and Treskavica. After cooling ourselves off at Peruce, we'll begin our gentle ascent (650-feet) to Gornji (upper) Lukomir. There is also a Donji (lower) Lukomir, long since abandoned by villagers due to the destructive effects of avalanches in this region. En route, we'll find quite a few sources where we can drink fresh spring water, very safe to drink for all.

Close to Umoljani we'll pass the cascades of Studeni Potok. At certain times of the year, the stream flows 1,312-feet into the Rakitnica Canyon below. Closer to Umoljani, we will see seven beautiful water mills, the magnificent source used for centuries as energy to grind wheat into flour. From the water mills we'll walk down to Umoljani, zig zagging along cultivated fields, where we'll be picked up and transferred back to Igman.

B,L,D...Hotel Feri, Igman

DAY 4, September 6 ~ Igman to Bjelasnica

Today we'll venture over Bjelasnica's peaks, and enjoy a rare view of the interior of the Bjelasnica Mountain range. Taking an asphalt road that meanders up Igman Mountain, we'll soon climb to 3,280-feet above sea level. There the attractive peaks of Treskavica Mountain (6,848') and its neighboring Jahorina Mountain are wrapped in perhaps a bit of snow. On a clear day, one can see the heights of Ljubisnja Mountain (7,373'), and the Durmitor Mountains of Montenegro off in the distance. Just behind us we will see Trebevic, the mountain that hides Sarajevo from our sight. Our southern horizon displays the Vlahinja Ridge, the highest part of Bjelasnica Mountain (6,779').

We'll start our hike by taking a winding mountain road from Grkarica entering a thick forest of conifers which will line the trail throughout our hike over Igman. We'll rise gently with Vlahinja Ridge always in our sight. It will take approximately 1.5 hours for us to reach the Ravna Vala Mountain Hut, situated at 5,084-feet.

From here, we'll hike over Bjelasnica and up to Karamustafini Cairi with its rolling contours. This is a great hiking trip for those interested in exploring the cross-country terrain used during the 1984 Olympics as well as gaining a better insight of the skiing terrain behind Igman. This area has an interesting micro climate caused by the particular relief of the area, e.g. natural sink holes, mountains and vegetation. It is for this reason that the lowest January temperature was recorded right here, -43 degrees C (-45.4 F). Burrrrr!

At this point the sky is our limit, and we may decide to either climb Hranisava Peak (6,409'), or veer off and visit Lokvanjsko Lake, or take a leisurely walk down to Stanari and Bajta. We'll return to Stanari by another trail over wide open grassy meadows. Our final destination is the road at Bajta where we'll be picked up and taken back to Sarajevo.

B,L,D...Hotel Europe, Sarajevo



DAY 5, September 7 ~ Sutjeska National Park

The next two days will be a highlight – A true adventure around one of Europe's last remaining virgin forests, combined with great hiking on the lush green slopes of the Zelengora Mountain Range. We'll enjoy exquisite views of Bosnia and Herzegovina's rugged border, and then a non-technical climb of Maglic – The highest peak in Bosnia and Herzegovina!

Today, after a two-hour drive through deep canyons and lush forests, we'll pass into BiH's oldest National Park, Sutjeska. Not far from here, we'll venture up a mountain road to the heart of the park – Zelengora. At Donje Bare, we'll leave our vehicle behind, and take a short walk to where we will leave our packs at a newly rebuilt mountain hut at Donje Bare. The lake of Donje Bare is lined with thick forests to one side and open mountain meadows to the other. We'll pass her on our way to Planinicu Peak at 5,838-feet. It's no coincidence that we've chosen the Pyramid Peak as our destination. From here, the highest peak in BiH towers above – Maglic at 7,826-feet – along with Volujak's rock face barrier, and the 3,936-feet deep canyon of the Sutjeska River. We'll then return via Gornje Bare to the hut to complete our fantastic 4-hour hike.

B,L,D...Hotel Mladost, Sutjeska National Park

DAY 6, September 8 ~ Summit of Maglic (Bosnia's Highest Peak)

Today there are two options. A strenuous hike up to the summit of Maglic, the highest peak in Bosnia & Herzegovina, or an easy hike to the magnificent, sparkling Trnovacko Lake. You can choose either option this morning.

Both groups will begin the day with a 45-minute drive to Perucica, a medieval forest. The park is a true gem in for wildlife and large numbers of endemic plants. The park also home to Bosnia and Herzegovina's highest and most impressive mountain Maglic, named after the thick fog that often surround its rocky peak. We'll briefly stop at Dragos Sedlo with its colorful views of the one of two remaining medieval forests in Europe - Perucica. Jumping out from eternity, we are graced by a lonely waterfall "Skakavac" which plunges itself 250-feet down into the dark spruce and beech forest of Perucica.

From the waterfall, we'll split up the group into those who will attempt the strenuous 3-hour hike up to the top of Maglic (7,826'), and those opting for the easier 2-hour hike to lovely Trnovacko Glacier Lake, from where we can watch the summiteers make their ascent (more description below).

At the end of the day, we'll all converge at the Trnovacko Glacier Lake, which is set in the middle of a huge amphitheater of rocky peaks, at 4,920-feet. After a well deserved break, we'll find our way back to the vehicle and return to our hotel completely amazed by what we've done and the natural beauty we've encountered.

B,L,D... Hotel Mladost, Sutjeska National Park



NOTE: The climb to the top of Maglic is not technical. Climbers will hike on a good trail, which can be steep and rocky and at times exposed. There are two hiking options in this area for those who do not wish to attempt a summit of Maglic. They include:

- 1) Trnovacko Glacier Lake Walk (4 hours, medium difficulty walk): From the waterfall in Perucica medieval forest, we'll walk around the forest. It is thick, and teeming with endemic life. We'll walk on to Prijedor for more incredible views fit for Kings – and Robin Hoods too! Maglic, Zelengora and Volujak will tower above us. This is a magical place. At the edge of the forest, we'll descend towards the Glacier Lake Trnovacko, which is set in the middle of a huge amphitheater of rocky peaks, at 4,920-feet. Weather permitting, we'll enjoy a swim before our tasty lunch, stretching your necks to get a glance at Bosnia's highest peaks all around you.
- 2) Perucica Old Growth Forest Hike (4-6 hours, medium difficulty hike). From the waterfall in Perucica medieval forest, we'll disappear into the magical forest of beautiful 165-feet high spruce and beech trees.

Our 4 - 6 hour journey will be over before you know it. Impressions are bountiful, especially the cycle of life and death of 200 to 300 year old trees. We are small, young and the trip will humble all our aspirations and ambitions..... Welcome to Perucica. At the edge of the forest we'll be greeted by the wide open spaces and fantastic views of Maglic and several high Montenegrin peaks.

DAY 7, September 9 ~ Mostar the Oriental Gem

An early morning transfer will take us deep into Herzegovina. Today we'll explore the historic towns of Mostar and Blagaj. We'll spend the early afternoon exploring Mostar, the former oriental trading center of Herzegovina, situated on the Neretva River. Undoubtedly, you will have heard much about this city, which was divided during the conflict in the early 1990s. We'll see the remaining scars of war here, but these days, Mostar is once again a warm and bustling place, with a fascinating history and beautiful architecture.

After Mostar, we'll travel to the nearby village of Blagaj before heading back to the Sutjeska National Park. Blagaj's highlights include the Buna Spring and the adjacent Ottoman house/monastery. The spring is simply amazing. It flows out of a 650-foot high cliff face and single-handedly creates the Buna River. Unsurprisingly, the Ottoman Sultan was impressed, and ordered a tekija to be built right next to it. This 16th Century monastery was built for the Dervish cults and is still one of the most mystical places in all of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Blagaj's old town center is worth taking a stroll through. This lazy Herzegovinian town moves at a slow pace and many of its old structures are reminiscent of the Ottoman days. A newly built heritage trail around the town is a rather pleasant 30 – 45 minute walk around the town starting at the Tekija Dervish House and visiting the Velagic House built in the 17th Century. It is a beautiful example of Ottoman stone masonry. We'll also see the old flour mills that the strong Buna powered, before returning to our hotel in Mostar for a rest before our farewell dinner.

B,L,D...Hotel Bristol, Mostar

DAY 8, September 10 ~ Airport Transfer and Farewell

After breakfast, we'll transfer 2.5 hours to the airport in Sarajevo, for departure flights home.

B...

2012 LAND COST

\$2,995 per person (12 – 30 climbers)

Rates quoted are per person, based on sharing double accommodations.

Single Supplement—\$400 for “requested” singles. If you prefer single accommodations, you must pay the Single Supplement Fee. If you’re traveling alone and wish to share accommodations, we’ll try our best to find you a roommate. If we cannot, you must pay the \$400 Single Supplement Fee.

What’s Included

- ◆ expert leadership
- ◆ accommodations in hotels as noted in itinerary
- ◆ meals as noted (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- ◆ airport transfers for the scheduled arrival and departure dates
- ◆ sightseeing as noted in the itinerary
- ◆ ground transportation
- ◆ basic medical and evacuation insurance

What’s Not

International airfare; meals not noted in itinerary; insurance other than basic medical and evacuation insurance as noted above (we strongly recommend you purchase the supplementary trip insurance offered by Mountain Travel Sobek, which includes trip cancellation insurance); optional tipping to leader, guides and local staff; excess baggage charges; airport transfers in Bosnia other than on the scheduled arrival and departure date; airport taxes; and items of a personal nature (sodas, alcoholic beverages, laundry, etc.).

Air Travel

Airfare is not included in the land cost of our trips. For air reservations, we recommend you contact the airlines directly, either by phone or the Internet. In addition, many travelers elect to use their “frequent flyer” miles when traveling with us.

Payment & Cancellation Policy

(This differs from regular Mountain Travel Sobek group trips.)

I. Payment

At time of reservation	\$800.00
120 days prior to departure	25% of Land Cost

90 days prior to departure balance of Land Cost

II. Cancellation

If written notice of cancellation is received: Cancellation Fee will be:

From time of reservation until	
90 days prior to departure	25% of Land Cost
89 - 60 days prior to departure	50% of Land Cost
59 days or less prior to departure	100% of Land Cost

WHAT'S NEXT?

Ready to go? Signing up is easy!

Call us at 1-888-MTSOBK (687-6235) and reserve a space with your credit card or use the enclosed reservation card. Frequent flyers with mileage-earning credit cards take note: you also have the option to make all your payments by credit card so you can rack up even more mileage for your next trip!

Then Leave the Rest to Us

Before you go, we provide you with extensive pre-departure information, including clothing recommendations, suggested reading lists, up-to-date health advice prepared by our consulting physician (an expert in wilderness medicine), and other details.

Why Mountain Travel Sobek is Your First Choice for Adventure

Mountain Travel Sobek is the pioneer in active adventure travel. No other adventure travel company can lay claim to that title. We were the first to take Americans trekking in Nepal, raft the wild rivers of Africa, and open up many previously inaccessible corners of the world to curious travelers. We set the standard for adventure travel and have a strong reputation for excellence that we do everything we can to maintain. Since we are the leading adventure company, we have a lot to live up to, so we make sure we provide safe, quality trips and the best customer service to our passengers.

With Mountain Travel Sobek, you'll see Bosnia and Herzegovina as only an insider can, with friendly, hospitable guides who know the region intimately. They'll accompany you throughout the day, lending support and insights about where you are and what you see. Their close familiarity with the local geography, history, culture and traditions (plus their entertaining stories and great jokes) are the key to a superb, informative experience—one you just can't get on your own.

References

Don't take our word for how great our trips are. We'll be happy to provide you with references of satisfied past travelers.

Questions?

Feel free to call us at 1-888-MTSOBK (687-6235) if you still have any questions or concerns.

MTS Program Director for Europe, Anne Wood, has traveled throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, having designed our regular trip there, and personally selected your guides. If you have any questions about traveling in Bosnia, please feel free to contact Anne directly at 800-282-8747 x6030, or email AnneW@MTSobek.com.

We're here to help you.

Note on Itinerary

Although we will do our very best to adhere to the itinerary schedule as listed, it is subject to change for numerous reasons beyond our control. Please read the Limitations of Liability and Booking Conditions in the four-page Participant Information Form.

Conditions of Participation

Your participation on a Mountain Travel Sobek trip is subject to the conditions stated in the four-page Participant Information Form, which includes the Agreement and Release from Liability and the Booking Conditions. We urge you to read this information carefully, and to call us if you have any questions.

Note on Services

To comply with regional laws and regulations, we sometimes use local suppliers who provide services that may include transportation, equipment, logistic support, and other services (hotels, restaurants, etc.). We work with service providers who share our commitment to safety and quality, and work closely with them to develop itineraries unique to Mountain Travel Sobek.

ABOUT YOUR TRAVEL IN BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA (BiH)

Accommodations

In Sarajevo we will stay at *Hotel Europe*, a modern, newly build 5-star Hotel in the old oriental trading quarter of Sarajevo.

On the Olympic Mountain of Igman, we will stay in *Hotel Feri*. Recently built, the hotel offers great accommodation right in the heart of the mountains.

In Mostar we use *Hotel Bristol*, a recently renovated old time favorite hotel near the old bridge. This hotel has nice clean rooms with mini bar, a/c and en-suite bathrooms.

In Sutjeska National Park, we use *Hotel Mladost*. This hotel has recently been partly reconstructed and provides very basic accommodation in an area with very little other suitable accommodation. Rooms are private, with en-suite bathrooms, and the usual modern comforts, but is not fancy.

Meals

We provide breakfast on all days except day 1. Breakfasts in Sutjeska National Park, Sarajevo, and Mostar will be a choice between hot and cold buffet.

A picnic lunch is included on days 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8. Lunches during the hikes will be picnic style, including bread, cheese, sausage, meat and vegetarian pate, salad, chocolate bars, cookies, trail mix, and coffee/tea. Lunches in Sarajevo and Mostar are in local restaurants offering a wide range of traditional and western dishes.

Evening meals in Sutjeska National Park are set (with a vegetarian option) including a starter, main course and desert. Dinners in Sarajevo and Mostar are in local restaurants known for their good food and great location. Dinner is a la carte, but does not include beverages.

Vegetarian and special diets can be catered to, but options are limited throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina – please inform Mountain Travel Sobek of any specific requirements upon booking.

Transportation

We use comfortable IVECO or VW Minivans (20+1) with A/C.

Isn't There a War in Bosnia?

No. Bosnia & Herzegovina (BiH) has recently celebrated 15 years of peace. The disintegration of the old Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia led to armed conflict in the region. On November 20, 1995, peace was signed between the various parties involved, and fighting ceased. Since then, the country's infrastructure has been largely reconstructed and tourists are returning to the country in ever increasing numbers, making tourism the fastest growing economic sector.

Is Bosnia Safe?

Despite the memory of Bosnia and Herzegovina's violent past, BiH is actually one of the safest places in Europe. Violent crime is virtually non-existent and most cases of violence are domestic. Walking the streets of any town or city at any time of day or night is a relatively safe bet. For women, it is not unusually unsafe to walk at night, even late at night on your own.

Most of BiH's roads are only double lane and quite curvy due to the mountainous terrain. Road maintenance is getting better, but don't let a pot-hole surprise you.

The main concerns for travelers in BiH are pick-pockets on tramways in Sarajevo. The pick-pockets can be avoided with simple precautions and awareness. On trams in Sarajevo, keep your purse close to you, and carry your wallet in your front pocket. Pick-pockets tend to be quick and talented, and you might not even know that you've been robbed until long after the fact.

What About Land Mines?

Bosnia is host to many land mines. They have polluted the countryside and cities all along former lines of confrontation. YES, they are a concern and NO, we take no risks.

Our local outfitter has extensive knowledge of mined areas and continues to liaise with the Mine Action Centre (MAC), local military officials, local communities in areas of question, and mountaineering associations throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. All of the trails we use have been trekked and checked by our guides and mine awareness officials. Gray areas with inaccurate info are automatically ruled out. One of our guides is a geographer and urban planner for Bosnia and Herzegovina and has extensive knowledge of mined areas and former lines of confrontation, literally down to the square foot. Fortunately for all of us, many gorgeous mountains are safe to visit. Our local staff is well-rehearsed in mine awareness, but this skill will not be necessary on any of our trips. ***We do not go into mined areas.***

Keep in mind also that mines were strategically placed in areas where Bosnian Muslims were hoping to defend themselves from attacks by Bosnian Serb nationalists, and Bosnian Croat nationalists. The majority of land mines were concentrated around very predictable locations, including the mountains that surround the city of Sarajevo, from which the Muslim population was besieged. In these mountains you will find signs along roads marking areas which have not yet been cleared by the Mine Action Centre. Our trip takes place very far from these mountains. However, we strongly advise against backpacking through Bosnia and Herzegovina without an expert guide.

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