

History of Belgrade

Belgrade, the capital of Serbia, boasts a rich history that spans millennia, reflecting a tapestry of cultures, conquests, and resilience. Its story begins in ancient times, when Celtic and Roman settlements dotted the area's landscape. In the 6th century, Slavic tribes established a settlement on the confluence of the Sava and Danube rivers, marking the birth of Belgrade.

Throughout the centuries, Belgrade witnessed the rise and fall of empires. It became a significant Ottoman stronghold in the 15th century, known as "Dorćol of the Orient." In the 19th century, the city became a battleground during the Serbian Revolution and gained independence from Ottoman rule. The Treaty of Berlin in 1878 recognized Serbia as a sovereign state, with Belgrade as its capital.

The 20th century brought its own challenges. During both World Wars, Belgrade faced destruction and occupation. Post-World War II, it became a part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, led by Josip Broz Tito. Following Tito's death in 1980, Yugoslavia experienced political turmoil, leading to its dissolution in the early 1990s and the subsequent Yugoslav Wars.

In recent decades, Belgrade has undergone significant transformation, emerging as a vibrant European city. Its historic architecture, such as the Belgrade Fortress and St. Sava Temple, juxtaposes with modern developments. The city's cultural diversity and lively arts scene continue to shape its identity.

Today, Belgrade stands as a symbol of resilience, reflecting its complex history and the indomitable spirit of its people. Its journey from ancient settlement to thriving metropolis embodies the enduring legacy of a city that has weathered countless changes while remaining a vital hub of the Balkans.

How to get here

- **Air**

Belgrade Nikola Tesla Airport is the largest international airport in Serbia, located 18 km west of the city center. Air Serbia, Serbia's national carrier, has its main hub at the airport connecting Belgrade with 80 destinations. Other legacy carriers include: Lufthansa, Swiss, Austrian airlines, LOT, Turkish airlines and many more. Low cost carriers include Easyjet, FlyDubai and Wizzair.

There is no rail connection between the airport and Belgrade. Bus line 72 connects the airport with Zeleni venac terminus in the city center and a minibus A1 connects the airport and Slavia square.

Taxis are available in front of the arrivals area. Please note that the ride from the airport is fixed in price by zone: 2300 rsd (≈20€) for destinations in New Belgrade, and 3000 rsd (≈26€) for Belgrade city center. You should pick up a taxi voucher at a booth in the arrivals hall. It is possible to arrange a private car transfer for about 5€ surcharge on top of the taxi fare.

- **Train**

Most main railway lines are being reconstructed at the moment, so the only international line is a daily train between Belgrade and Bar, Montenegro.

- **Bus**

Main bus station is located next to the city center. There are a lot of direct buses to regional countries (Bosnia, North Macedonia, Hungary, Croatia, Montenegro) and long distance (Italy, France, Germany).

There are companies (GeaTours, Terra Travel...) that organize transfers between the airports in Zagreb, Croatia; Budapest, Hungary; and Timișoara, Romania and any address in Belgrade for 30-50€ one way.

- **Where to stay**

There are 3 hotels within 5 minutes walk from the conference center: [Crowne Plaza](#), [Hyatt Regency](#) and [InHotel](#).

There is a large choice of hotels in the city center. Good but still somewhat budget friendly hotels include [Mercure hotel](#) (next to the Parliament building), [Hotel Prag](#), [Royal Inn](#) (minutes away from the city center and fortress), [Jump Inn](#) and [Calisi](#) hotels (close to the Sava riverfront, minutes from bars, night clubs). All these hotels are easy 3-5 bus/tram stops from the Sava convention center.

- **Transportation**

- **Public**

Public transportation is done jointly by a city owned GSP Beograd and private providers, hence the same ticketing system is used. As of writing of this text, tickets are digital only. You can buy them via SMS (fare price + the price of the SMS) or via app ([Android](#) [Apple](#)). In the app, apart from buying the ticket, you can see nearby stations and check for vehicle arrival time.

Ticket prices are 50 RSD (≈0,45€) for 90 minutes (unlimited transfers), 120 RSD (≈1,05€) for a day ticket and 800 RSD (≈6,84€) for a 7 day ticket.

Night buses (midnight to 4AM) have specific lines, run every hour and are free of charge.

- **Taxi**

Taxi fare prices are regulated by the city and consist of a starting charge plus distance charge. Rides on Sunday and between 10pm and 6am are more expensive.

Most taxi companies use apps and/or Viber/WhatsApp to schedule rides. The largest taxi companies are Pink, Naxis and Beogradski.

Note: It is ok to hail a taxi on the street but be careful of drivers that pick up passengers in front of the clubs, Republic and Terazije squares and bus station - their license plates need to finish with letters TX (or they are not an official taxi) and always check for the price. Rides within the city center and most of the sights should not be more than 5-10€ (550-1200 RSD).

- **Car (parking)**

Apart from the ones located in New Belgrade, most city hotels don't offer parking for guests. Street parking in central parts of the city is time limited depending on the zones - maximum parking length is between 30 minutes and 3 hours. There is no time limit in parking garages, but spaces fill up quickly.

Parking is available in front of the lower level of the Sava congress center (city garage) and in surrounding streets (blue zone: no time limit, payable by SMS or app).

- **What to see and do**

- **Kalemegdan fort**

The fort is located in the city center above the confluence of the Danube and the Sava rivers. Most of the fort is a mixture of Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian built ramparts (16th to 19th century). After the official return of the fort to Serbian rule from the Ottomans in the middle of the 19th century, the fort has been transformed to a park with monuments and busts of famous poets and painters, the Military museum that tells the story of Belgrade from the bronze age to the present time. A large number of mid-century armor (guns and tanks) is located in front for all visitors. There is a zoo, a gallery of the Museum of natural history and basketball and tennis courts open to visitors.

- **Museums**

Tesla museum in Krunska street. During a guided tour (starts every full hour, some are in English) you will see a short film about the famous inventor and his most important inventions, see firsthand the Tesla transformer and light up a bulb without power cables. Over 200 000 pages of his documents are stored there, while the central place is taken by his urn.

The National museum of Serbia, located at the Republic square, is a museum that spans art history from Egypt to the early 20th century. You can see works of Serbian artists, but also works of Italian and French masters.

The Military museum, located at the Kalemegdan fort, is a testament of the military history of the Belgrade region from the bronze age to the modern times. Apart from the regular indoor exhibit, there is also a public exhibit in the surrounding park of WWII guns and tanks.

- **Parks**

Belgrade has a number of small neighborhood parks. Apart from the fort, large ones include Tašmajdan park (located next to the Parliament building) and Ada lake - artificial lake made by making 2 dams in the Sava river. The 2km long lake is surrounded by beaches, bike paths, bars and clubs and courts for any outdoor sport imaginable - basketball, football, rugby, tennis, golf, bungee jumping and many more.

- **Churches**

Saint Sava's church is one of the largest Orthodox churches in the world and is built at the place where the body of St Sava, founder of the Serbian Orthodox church, was burned by the Ottomans in the 16th century.

St. Mark's cathedral in Tašmajdan park is built in the Serbian Moravian style that was popular in Serbia in the 13th and 14th centuries. It is a place of rest for the first Serbian emperor Stefan Dušan, crowned in 1346. His codex of Law is considered to be the first Serbian constitution.

- **Walking tour suggestion**

Start at Karađorđe's park, the home of St. Sava's temple and the National library of Serbia. Walk the small streets of the Vračar neighborhood to the Tesla museum. After the tour, continue to King Aleksandar's boulevard and Tašmajdan park. Walk through it to get to St. Mark's church and Pioneers park where you will find the Parliament, City Hall and Residency of the President of Serbia. Turn to Terazije square and eat a slice of Moscow cake at hotel Moscow - the oldest hotel in Belgrade. Have a walk down a pedestrian Knez Mihailo Street towards Kalemegdan. The walk takes you past the Republic square where the National Theatre and the National Museum are situated. Have a walk in the fortress park. There is always an open exhibit of art or photographs and a great view of the rivers. Finish the day at "???" (the oldest traditional bar in Belgrade) or grab a dinner in one of the restaurants of Skadarska street - the bohemian quarter with traditional food and live bands playing old school music.

- **Night life**

- Restaurants worth visiting

1. ****Ambar**** - Specializes in Balkan cuisine, offering a wide range of traditional dishes with a modern twist.
2. ****Manufaktura**** - Offers a variety of Serbian and regional specialties in a cozy atmosphere.
3. ****Little Bay**** - Combines fine dining with live classical music performances.
4. ****Madera Restaurant**** - Known for its wood-fired grill and diverse menu.
5. ****Dva Jelena**** - A historic restaurant serving classic Serbian dishes.
6. ****Lorenzo & Kakalamba**** - Known for its quirky decor and a mix of international and Serbian dishes.

- **Bars to check out**

1. ****Rakia Bar**** - Offers an extensive selection of rakia, a traditional Serbian fruit brandy.
2. ****Drugstore Beograd**** - A unique venue located in an industrial space, hosting various events and DJ performances.
3. ****Mladost/Ludost**** - A popular spot with a retro vibe, known for its diverse music selection and lively atmosphere.
4. ****KC Grad**** - A cultural center with a bar, hosting art exhibitions, concerts, and DJ nights.
5. ****Supermarket Talas**** - Offers a variety of craft beers in a laid-back atmosphere.
6. ****Kafana Ona Moja**** - Blends a traditional kafana (tavern) ambiance with modern elements, often hosting live music.
7. ****20/44 Boat Club**** - A boat turned bar, floating on the Sava River, with electronic music and a relaxed atmosphere.

8. **Mikser House** - A creative space with a bar, hosting cultural events, exhibitions, and workshops.
9. **Kalemegdanska Terasa** - Located near the Belgrade Fortress, this bar offers stunning views of the city.
10. **Kafeterija** - A chain of specialty coffee shops known for their quality coffee and cozy atmosphere.