



The Motoroamers
**Touring Bosnia by
Motorhome**

Schengen Shuffle Travel



1 BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA

When you come across a new country that gets into your soul, it's hard to forget the indelible mark it leaves on you. Whilst all travel is a privilege, there are just some places that are ultra special.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is one of those countries. Not one that might instantly come to mind, yet thanks to Croatia become part of Schengen Jan 2023, Bosnia is soon to be on every Britain's travel list. We need a new place to explore that doesn't eat up our precious allowance; and Bosnia may well be it.

About your Mini-Guide to BiH

Many of our eBooks are based on at least a month's travel, giving us an authentic and comprehensive look at a country.

Yet such is our passion for promoting Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) we feel that even after an 11 day tour, a mini guide is justified to introduce you to this fabulous destination.

There is so much to share about this Balkan country that despite the duration of our tour, we have more than enough to whet your appetite and inspire you to put Bosnia on your travel agenda. So sit back and allow us to indulge you in our trip that took us from media influenced uncertainty to serious marketing promoters.

Who are we?

Formally, we are Karen and Myles; digital nomads who are inspired to discover the world with the freedom and choice that this travelling lifestyle has gifted us. More lovingly we are known as *The Motoroamers* and in March 2016 we packed up and packed in our life in the UK for a gap year of travel whilst we sold property. The grand plan was to put down our roots in the south-west and find the 'good life', once we had sown our travel seeds.

With visions of a small-holding, donkeys, chickens and soil tarnished fingernails put aside, we hit the road in our

motorhome Scoobie. We were ready for adventures and exploration that would soothe our curious spirits and satiate our inner-adventurer. Yet a few weeks into our trip we discovered that this was the life we wanted permanently and that 'going back' was not an option. So from that moment on, 'home' became the place where Scoobie's tyres rested. We found love in every dawn, each new vista cleansed our eager eyes and fed our desire to live with freedom, fearlessness and choice.

In our first year with our trusty steed, a Pilote 740 (7.5m), we visited 10 countries and covered 12,000 miles; from Spain to Slovenia, to France, Belgium and Netherlands. A rich array of adventures that satiated our need to feel alive after too many decades of corporate stress and burn-out.

Spring 2017 heralded a new set of adventures as we began an epic journey into uncharted territory. The idea was to travel across to [Greece](#) and then follow a natural passage through the eastern borders of [Bulgaria](#) and [Romania](#). What incredible cultures and natural wonders these countries had to offer. So young on the European stage and yet a whole new set of experiences for the eager traveller.

2018 was all about uncovering the scars of [Poland](#) and [Slovakia](#) and 2019 our adventures took us into the Nordic highlights of Scandinavia's north-eastern trio of [Denmark](#), [Sweden](#) and [Norway](#).

Then early 2020 a magical mystery tour of **Morocco** awaited us as we stepped out of our comfort zone and onto the African continent with the leap of a gazelle. Little did we know how poignant this trip would be as Covid struck around us and Moroccan borders locked up within four days of us leaving the country. Since then the memory of our lockdowns are all too real and they have in one way accelerated our passion for travel, having been grounded for so long.

And with the crisis diminishing, we hope, we can once again roar our engine, stretch those tyres and set our wanderlust spirits free again without limitation. Albeit with a slightly different philosophy of *slow travel*, we stay true to our ***inspiring you to travel*** roots.

In 2022, with a new spring in our step, a two-month tour of **Irresistible Ireland** started out as a Schengen Shuffle strategy. Yet it ended as so much more. Our dedicated guide shares what we hope will be seen as a genuine enthusiasm for this stunning yet often neglected neighbour.

Then onwards to Europe's mainland where, with a surprise rendezvous to celebrate a big family Birthday, Croatia-bound we went. A three-month sojourn before they joined the Schengen gang, allowed us to indulge in this Queen of coastal landscape. And it was from here that our inspiration for BiH was conceived, and for that we will be eternal grateful.

So step into this latest guide and let's see if, with our itineraries, our practicalities and our tempting photos we can lure you eastwards towards a Schengen-free experience.

Karen, Myles and Scoobie

<https://www.motoroaming.com>



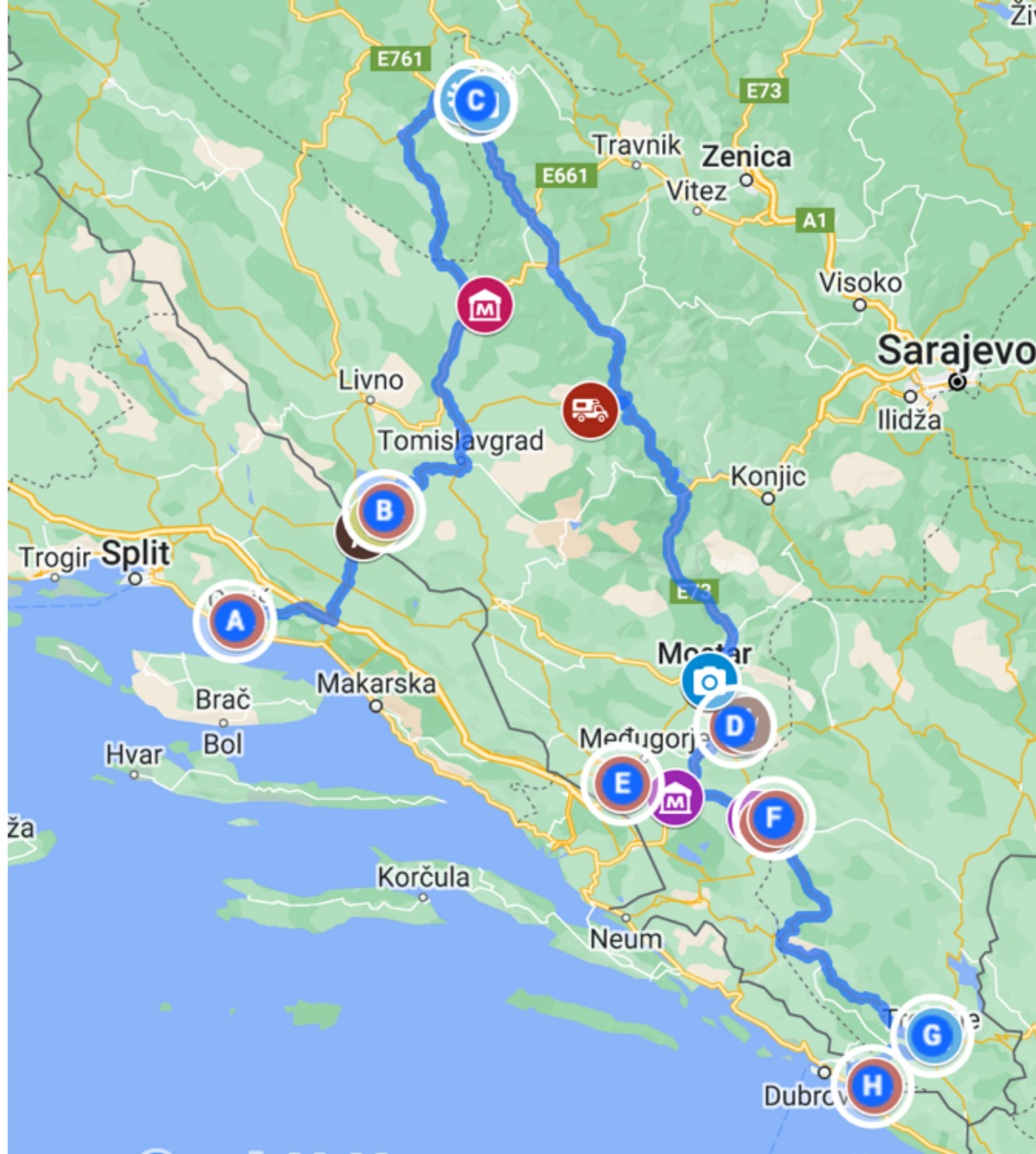


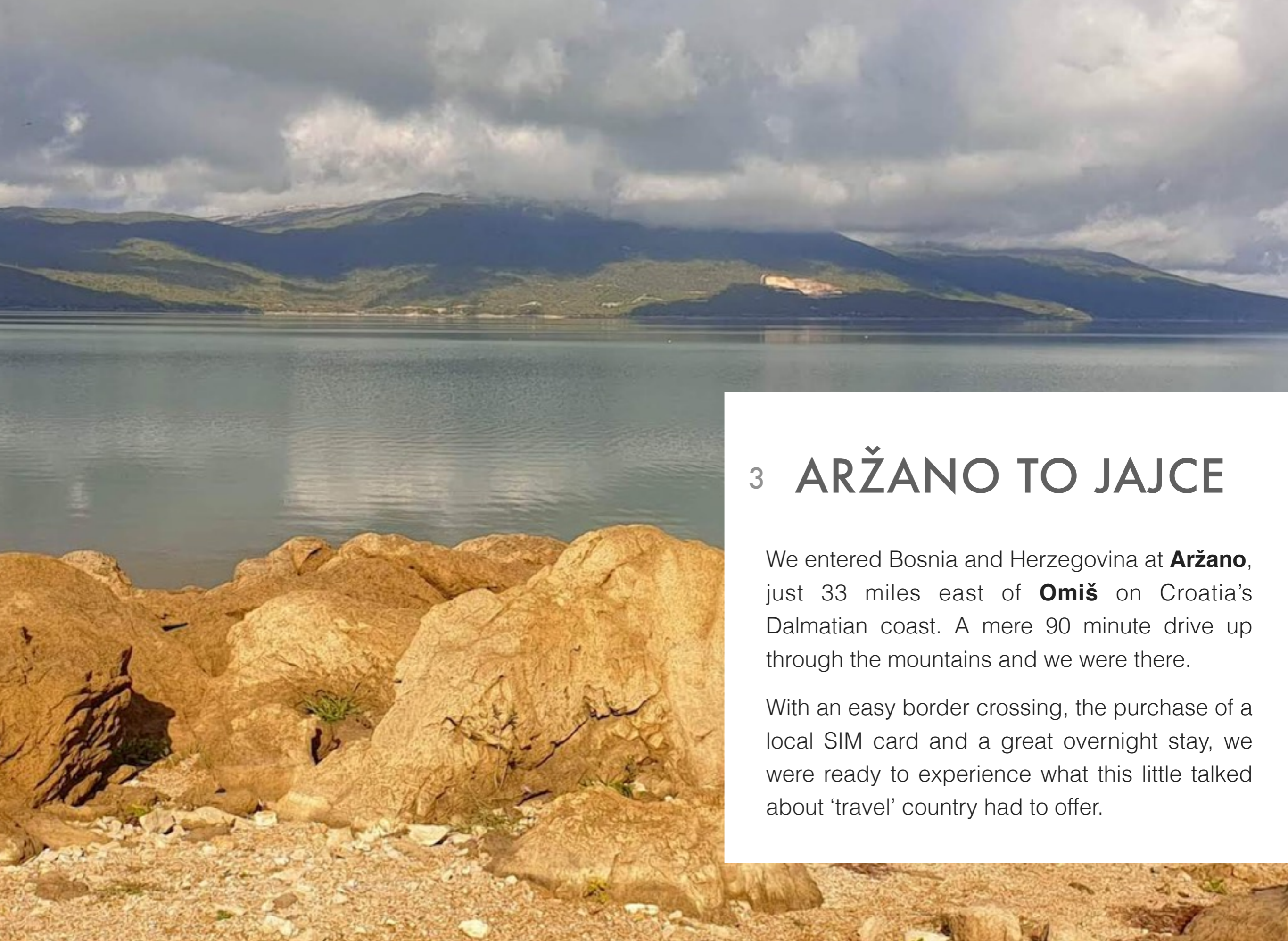
2 11 Day Route Through Bosnia

Whilst we may only have dipped our proverbial toes into BiH's waters, it was enough to hook us like a baited fish.

Covering 400 miles (650km) we realise that on this mini tour we only scratched the surface of this fabulous country. Yet what we learned during that time feels worthy of sharing. And of course as our trip continues in the years to come, as we carry on our Schengen Shuffling, we will add to this eBook and republish.

So this will be a truly evolving guide and we hope that our experiences will be enough to whet your appetite and inspire you to create your own magnificent memories.





3 ARŽANO TO JAJCE

We entered Bosnia and Herzegovina at **Aržano**, just 33 miles east of **Omiš** on Croatia's Dalmatian coast. A mere 90 minute drive up through the mountains and we were there.

With an easy border crossing, the purchase of a local SIM card and a great overnight stay, we were ready to experience what this little talked about 'travel' country had to offer.



BUŠKO BLATO PLAZA - OUR FIRST OVERNIGHT

We crossed that Bosnia and Herzegovina border with deftness and decided not to travel too far on our first day. We just wanted to find a safe place to stay overnight and ground ourselves in this new territory. A practice we have always adopted.

With a single track road signposted to the beach, we headed towards the lake edge. It looked a bit tricky when the tarmac ran out even though it was a well used path by the locals. So after a quick scouting trip, it was all good for Scoobs. And soon enough, after a few low branches, this vista was revealed. We couldn't think of a better place to have our first night in the company of Mother Nature.

A man-made lake and reservoir, nestled in the mountains gave us a feeling of safety. Who would have thought this was Bosnia?

Crystal clear waters just beckoned for an early morning swim with water temps that took my breath away, although boy was it refreshing. What a great way to start the day. Accompanied by a 100 strong flock of cormorants, the scenery and wildlife were just magnificent.

The peace here was palpable - a symbol of our mini trip through BiH. [Click on this image to see our footage of this special place.](#)







KUPRES' WAR MEMORIAL

I love that travel educates and surprises us in equal measure. We knew that Bosnia would help wipe the media slate clean and teach us the real truth of this emerging and peaceful nation.

Our first lesson was about to hit us straight between the eyes. As we wound up the mountains from **Lake Buško Blato**, wowed by the already shapely surroundings, we wanted a place to grab a coffee. And this memorial site looked perfect.

A quick recce and a swift bit of Google Translate, soon gave rise to lesson number 1 on the Bosnian Conflict. **Kupres** is a rich plateau at the top of the mountains, that during the war was seen as strategic land. Even since Roman times, Kupres was an important trade route. This region saw two major battles, where

a fight for its territory ensued. The first was between April 3-7 1992, A second in November 1994. This seemingly tiny place in the middle of nowhere had its heart torn out twice.

As we drove through the countryside, it was clear to see the scars of war. From the massive divots of incoming bombs to the bullet holes that are still evident in the walls of people's homes. All there for us to witness and serve as a reminder.

Yet aside of this, Kupres is a winter ski resort and has a multitude of springs due to its Karst formation. It lies on very unstable tectonic land by all accounts, that regularly suffers from earthquakes. Now that I didn't know. Bosnia has earthquakes.



JAJCE - MLINČIĆI WATERMILLS

After a sobering drive through Kupres where an eerie silence swamped the van, we tried to focus on the incredible scenery around us. We would come to learn that, in spite of Bosnia's tragic war in the early 90's, its landscape holds a robust history of its own. And soon we found the meandering roads, that took us on a quiet route through what felt like virgin pine forest, soothed our souls. We felt like pioneers even if we were not.

Our delight at this incredible landscape, that we had never imagined to grace such a worn-torn country, was palpable. The effect of Bosnia on us, after just 24 hours had us moved between reverent silence and excited chatter for all that we were witnessing.

After the mountains, a teasing display of topaz water soon caught our eye between the pine trees as we started our mountain descent. The **Pliva river** opened up its vista to an enormous lake, clearly enjoyed by locals during the high season. Taking the low road, we had the **Mlinčići Water Mills** in our sights. Having found this magical place in my research, I just knew it had my name written all over it.

What befell my eager eyes is nothing short of exquisite. Dating back to the Austro-Hungarian period of mid 1860s, these 20 or so wooden mills are perched above the cascading water using their energy to power wheat milling. It truly is a magical place where you could expect to see Hobbits living. As you can imagine, we stayed a while with my camera clicking madly.







JAJCE - ANCIENT CAPITAL AND WONDERFUL WATERFALLS

After being wowed at **Mlinčići**, just 3 miles down the road was our home for the night and our next camera-clicking panorama.

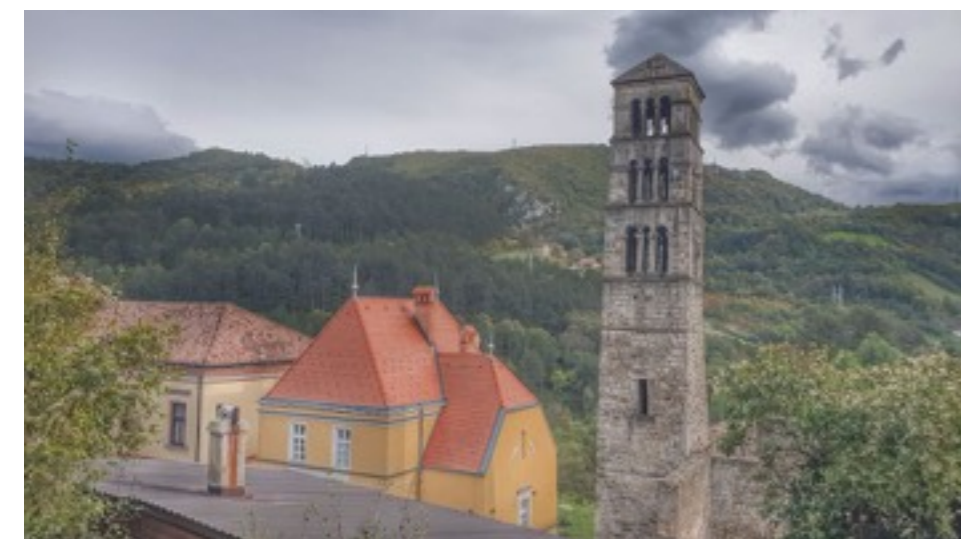
We arrived at the ancient capital of the **Kingdom of Bosnia** built in the 14th century. **Jajce**, a walled city with its castle atop the hill gave it a great vantage point along the valley of the Pliva and Vrba rivers. With a checkered past that has seen slain kings, a change in power between the Ottomans and Austrian-Hungarians, Jajce has seen its fair share of drama; including WW2 and the Bosnian war, where much of the town was destroyed. It was liberated in 1995 and rebuilt by 2006 and Jajce is currently on the UNESCO pending list.

These days, this quiet unassuming town in the north of the country is more of a tourist attraction than a strategic centre for

power. Nestled between the mountains the ancient walls and the old town quaintly draw in those who make the journey north. Cobbled streets, cafés and historical monuments make Jajce an intriguing place to call home for a few days. Although its pièce de resistance is the 65m waterfall that cascades from the town centre to the Vrba river below.

You can get three excellent views of the waterfalls. One is a full-frontal view from across the Vrba river, which you access via the main road. *The other two sit close to its outer edge.* The upper viewpoint is free, whilst the other, with its purpose-built viewing platform, costs 4M per person which is £1.80 each. Be prepared for a soaking as you get so close you can almost touch the water. There is an annual diving competition from the falls each August which must be a spectacle.







4 ROUTE JAJCE TO BLAGAJ

Heading south from the old capital Jajce was a mesmerising journey along the river **Vrba**. With its topaz waters sparkling even in the dull skies of our late September day, it still mesmerised us.

With the towering mountains of the **Blindje Nature Park** surrounding us, we felt our insignificant size in the Universe. So tiny amongst such magnificent giants that we humbly bowed our heads in honour of their prowess. With hydropower dominating the area and rural life taking over from the city-life, we got a taste of another side of Bosnia.



RAMA JEZERO AND BLIDNJE NATURE PARK MOUNTAINS

Where Croatia is the coastal Queen, Bosnia is the King of the mountains, lakes and rivers. Two contrasting landscapes that satiate our hunger for incredible views.

Expletives dried up as we gawped like teenagers at the magical spectacle in front of us. What a drive; full of drama, theatre and a stage that needed no actors, no lines, just incredible scenery and lighting. Sometimes there are no words. The rural life through this part of BiH is simple, rustic and of the earth. Through every hamlet we saw locals preparing their winter wood stores and selling their home grown root vegetables and cabbages, one of Bosnia's staples.

Our retreat was the incredible Rama Lake; a reservoir of topaz blue set against the golden sand, with beautifully sculptured edges that clearly held more volume than the dry summer offered us now. Our home was with Delfina and Marko at their **Franjušić Autocamp** overlooking the lake and nearby 15th century monastery. Their hospitality was endearing and their warmth and generosity knows no bounds. For a mere £10 you get to share their home and their company.

Reluctantly we tore ourselves away from this haven, heading south of **Mostar** to **Blagaj**. Although not before our eyes befell yet more incredible scenery.





BLAGAJ - DERVISH HOUSE AND FORTRESS

Blagaj sits on the fertile and Mediterranean influenced plain of Herzegovina. Here the source of the Karst river **Buna** starts its journey and is home to the famous **Dervish monastery**. It is thought to have been created in 1520 by a mystical arm of the Sufi Islam known for their rituals of whirling. This is where the *whirling Dervish* phrase comes from. The Ottoman-style house of praise and chanting is built into the mountain and is the centrepiece for this ancient village. Irrespective of your religious or non religious beliefs, you are welcomed into this peaceful sanctuary.

For an entry fee of 5M (about £2.50) you get access to this serene oasis. Chanting is held here three nights a week, other times you are able to enter the monastery and immerse yourself in their Muslim

culture and just contemplate life or nothing - as you choose. Blagaj is not a destination, it is an experience and it's a very beautiful one.

Just as a word of caution; men must wear long trousers and at least a t-shirt. Ladies must wear clothing below the knee with covered shoulders and head. Clothing is offered at the entrance, although we suggest you come prepared. You will also be asked to remove your shoes before you enter.

Water is a key symbol of the **Tekke**, which is the Turkish word for 'place of worship' or Sufi lodge. As one of their quotes say '*We made every living thing from water.*' Being so close to the source of the Buna is an integral part of the monastery's fabric. Inside the build has a respectful silence and bare feet pad lightly on the



wooden floors. Carpets of brilliant red cover the basic boards and above your head you will find intricate carved ceilings or a kaleidoscope of stars representing the heavens upon which to focus your eyes.

It is a simple building that holds great strength and a tour won't take you long although it is worth it for just experiencing the tranquility.

There are plenty of restaurants that hug the river with a romantic air about them. Be warned though; the tourist tat run will have you attracted by pomegranate juice, fridge magnets and all manner of other useless items.

If you cross the small bridge and go up behind the restaurants, you can find a small path that takes you to the opposite side of the river. This is the best photo opportunity as you can get the waterfall and the Dervish House reflection in the beautiful blue waters. Afternoon is a great time to visit as the sun is behind you for the best shots.

If you want to go into the cave it will cost you 4M - (£1.80) per person although the reviews didn't rate this highly enough for us to indulge.

Instead we took our eBikes up the very steep road by the car park to reach the hiking path to Blagaj's fortress. Research shows that this site



dates back to the 4th century, although the Stjepan Grad fortress as it is today dates back to the medieval period. It is 266m above the source of the Buna, some of which you must cycle, then the rest you hike up the serpentine path that has been cut through the mountains to reach the summit. The views to this protected monument are amazing and well worth the 20 minute climb. If you have a camper van you can drive this small road, although we wouldn't recommend motorhomes.





Mostar's famous bridge

MOSTAR - CITY OF DIVERSITY AND PROFOUND HEALING

When a visit to a place on my Bucket List is imminent, I feel a mixture of reticence and anticipation. The excitement of witnessing something for myself, blended with a hope that it will meet my expectations. Expectation is, after all at the root of unhappiness.

So imagine those mixed emotions for visiting the famous, multi-cultural epicentre of Bosnia; **Mostar**. The iconic images of the **Stari Most** bridge, from where the town derives its name, were at the forefront of my mind. Yet feeling the soul of the town and its long-spanned heritage was just as important.

The dusty plains of the **Neretva Valley** are, I'll be honest, not pretty and any peek of the cultural phenomenon not obvious. Yet as we cycled the precarious 7 mile route from Blagaj, like an onion I

began stripping away the crabby outer edges. My first sweet view of Mostar was a blaze of colour; rainbow hues along the famous East Bank of the town.

Arriving early before the swarming crowds meant that we had the place to ourselves. Whilst the tat stalls along the narrow streets draw your eye down, it is **up** that the view is best. The roofline and the facades all tell stories dating back to the 1470s and the Ottomans. A time when a defensive settlement built across a river, evolved into a symbol of multicultural coexistence.

Mostar's charm, with its historical layers pulls you along its cobbled streets effortlessly. The Turkish houses, bazaars, mosques, churches all fuse into one entity. Men sat at cafés play



Backgammon, women mind the stalls, artisans craft their metal plates. To the gentle echoes of the Call to Prayer and the river's flow, the Mostar bridge jumpers bring you back down to earth, reminding us of the tourist's role in sustaining this vibrant little town.

Authentic life beats in Mostar in spite of the thousand strong visitors each day. Tourist marketing attempts to lure you in to supposed 'best views in town' yet resistance will reward you with quiet and unassuming cafés and hidden restaurants that offer by far a better view.

Wandering through the maze of streets made with the most enormous pebbles I've ever seen, you begin to get a sense of life here. The historical Ottoman architecture, the ancient Muslim schools with their iconic chimneys and the bomb-blasted ghostly ruins.

The ancient history is second to none, yet Mostar's more recent tales form the fabric of this symbolic town. The part of the city they don't want you to see reveals the hard truth of war.

Mostar was demolished in the Bosnia War of the 90's, the bridge and Old Town included. And all measure of untold horror and war crimes committed here.

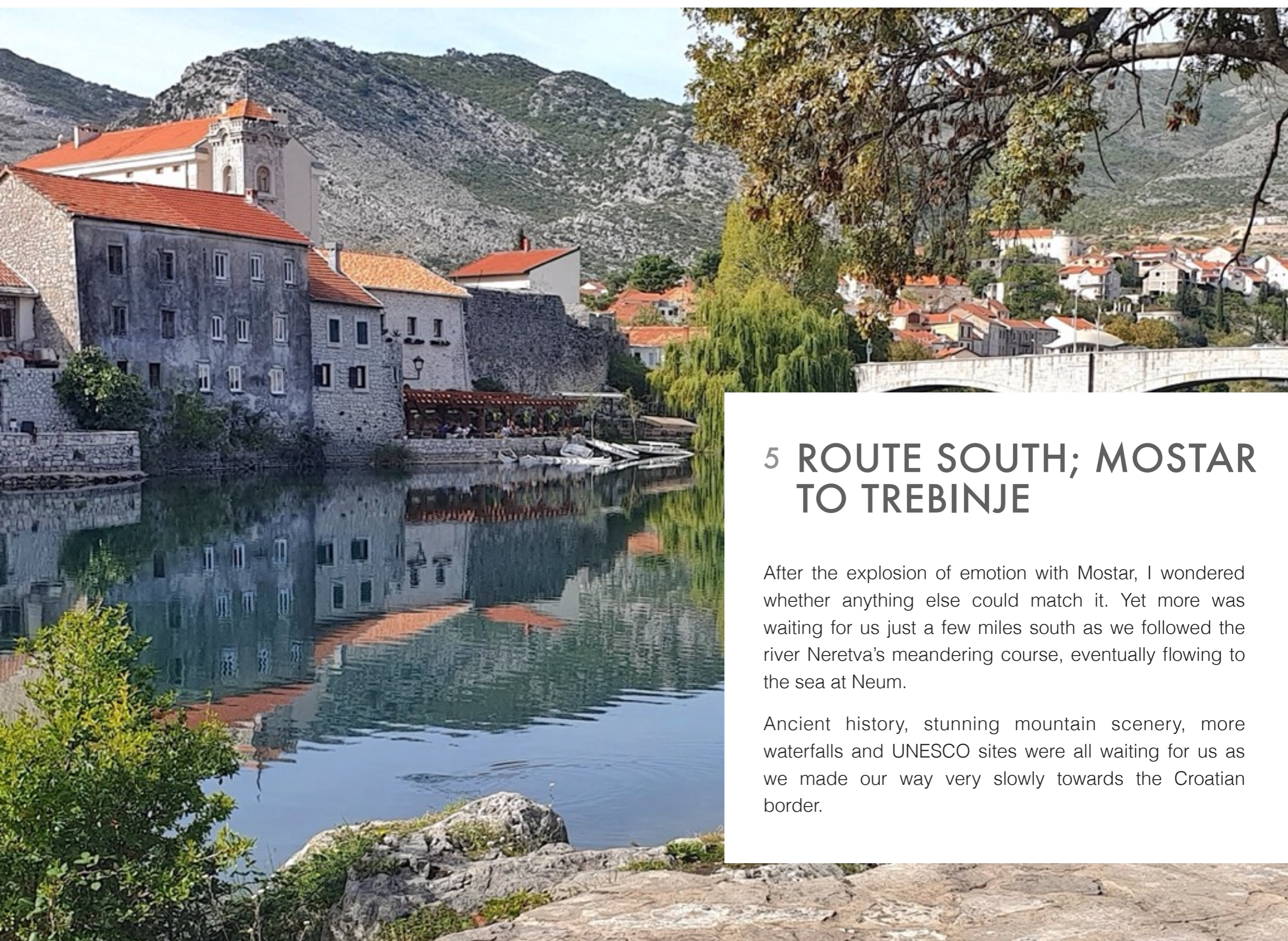
Yet, thanks to international effort, the Mostar we see today has been rebuilt, reborn to its former glory. To the naked eye you would never know yet there are still scars if you look. Whilst war may be the glory hunter, it is unity and peace that prevail and Mostar is the symbol of this.

Under UNESCO's protective eye, Mostar is great again. Our visit here was totally captivating, a little shocking and utterly mesmerising.

Did it meet my Bucket List expectations? A resounding yes.... and so much more.







5 ROUTE SOUTH; MOSTAR TO TREBINJE

After the explosion of emotion with Mostar, I wondered whether anything else could match it. Yet more was waiting for us just a few miles south as we followed the river Neretva's meandering course, eventually flowing to the sea at Neum.

Ancient history, stunning mountain scenery, more waterfalls and UNESCO sites were all waiting for us as we made our way very slowly towards the Croatian border.



POČETJLI - ANCIENT VILLAGE

A reluctance to leave Mostar on our trip south was softened by the UNESCO protected site of **Počitelj**. Just south, nestled into the craggy mountain side is an unassuming village. One that with the road hugging the Neretva could be easily bypassed. Yet a stop here is a must because it is an icon, often compared to Stari Most for historical significance, if perhaps on a smaller scale.

An hour at Počitelj is like stepping into a time capsule and turning back the dial 900 years into a bygone era of medieval kings and Ottoman rule. Such a tiny fortress settlement that, in its day packed a strategic punch. So often our minds imagine that only *big is mighty*, yet Počitelj defies this theory. Its size and self-contained unity is perhaps the very fabric of its indomitable character that still stands before us.

Its river frontage and western location, meant that Počitelj was an important administration centre. With its fortress guarding along the upper karst cliff and its blend of terraced medieval and oriental architecture, Počitelj is an *urban ensemble*; a harmonious unity of design and construction.

In the Austrian-Hungarian period, the village lost its strategic strength falling into disrepair. This, paradoxically was its salvation as this tiny settlement held onto its form.

Today it is classed as the best preserved village of its kind.

Sadly, as is so often the case in these parts, the war took its toll destroying much of the settlement. Yet Počitelj has risen from the ashes and its recovery is sealed. It is now on the **World's 100 most endangered cultural heritage sites**, sat under the protective and watchful eye of UNESCO.

As you weave your way through the myriad of narrow cobbled alleyways, you get a sense of the different roles played here. The foothill bazaars run by the residents, the mosque and school, the clock tower, the fortress....

From the top, the roofline is its most dominant feature. All manner of shapes and sizes nestled into this almost amphitheatre formed arc. What a privilege to walk in the footsteps of such profound history.







KRAVICA FALLS - COULD HAVE BEEN SO MUCH MORE

After the high of **Počitelj** and its unique historical tales, we had high expectations of **Kravica Waterfalls**. We were surely on a roll.

Alas it wasn't to be. 45 mins into the mountain foothills, close to the Croatian border, we arrived at the much-hyped waterfalls marketed as an *'Oasis in Stone'*.

What a disappointment. A touristy spot, to see what I'm sure in spring is more magnificent than its parched autumn display. After a steep descent from the car park, we arrived at what can only be described as a 'pond', surrounded by an arc-shaped wall of tumbling, forested cascades, that in October trickled rather than gushed. It had the promise of great things although with loungers around the pond edges, a few cafés and a lot of local picnic goers, it lacked a certain 'je ne sais quoi'.

Aside of the Instagram models wading waist high in their bikinis for the ultimate shot it was pleasant enough. I think it was the sting of the 40M entrance fee - that's £9 per person that gave us the sense of poor value. We were left wanting so much more than it gave us. Perhaps the memory of **Krka Falls** was just too strong in our minds to allow this little oasis to be beautiful in its own right.

Still, they gave us permission to stay in the car park overnight. So that rebalanced our investment in what was a disappointing natural beauty orchestrated entirely for the tourist.

If you are tempted to go and it is spring time, then head on over - otherwise, save your money for something more valuable.





RADIMLJA - 15TH CENTURY NECROPOLIS, UNESCO

As our wheels set a course south, back towards Dubrovnik, we had a final few delights to enrich our travellers' tales. My research threw up a unique spectacle in a precious archaeological region of Herzegovina close to **Stolac**.

The 15th century Necropolis at **Radimlja**, protected by UNESCO, is a special place that holds a collection of over 130 **stećaks**; slabs, tombstones and chests with intricate carvings.

The beautiful motifs are a sign of recognition to those departed and even 700 years on, they are still clearly defined. They depict hunting scenes, traditional dance, weapons and vines.

Sadly in the Austrian-Hungarian period, a new road through the site destroyed nearly 30 tombs in the name of progress. The second half of the open-air museum is on the other side of the road.

UNESCO recognised the importance of this area in 2016 and put it on the World Heritage List.

It costs 4M (€1.80) per person to enter the museum and it will only take you 30 minutes of your time to explore, although it is a treasure that is pretty unique to this part of the world. It is easy to park a motorhome and is a must see if you want to acknowledge part of BiH's culture and history.





STOLAC

A mile down the road from **Radimlja** was the main attraction; as if 700 year old tombs weren't enough!

The off the beaten track town of **Stolac**, one of BiH's most ancient and culturally important towns.

For history, ecology and cultural lovers this place will satisfy your every wish without the dreaded tourist hoards. Evidence near-by indicates that Stolac is 15000 years old as a settlement, whilst the old town popped up relatively recently; in the 5th century!

Known as *'The Crossroads of Civilisation'* you will see the true meeting of cultures here, symbolised, we felt like the whole of BiH. Jews, Orthodox Serbians, Muslims and Christians live here together

harmoniously it seems. Yet this unassuming town tucked away in the mountains, is the very picture of serenity and progress.

Perched high above the 'new' town is the **Vidoška Fortress**; a steady 15 minute walk up to the top of the hill, protectively watching over its domain. This fortress is the largest of its kind in BiH and gives incredible views across the lush landscape with Mediterranean winds that favour its organic garden, a veritable haven for fruit and veg.

Despite some battle weary buildings, this tree-lined town with its mills and waterfalls, Stolac is a classy place, regenerating their passion for embracing diversity. It's one not to be missed. With an overnight at the near-by **Camping Heaven in Nature**, you'll be set for plenty of exploration in this area.







TREBINJE OLD TOWN AND MONASTERIES

With our route towards Trebinje that hugged the mountains, we ran out of adjectives for this incredible canvas. Bosnia surprised and delighted us in equal measure. With luscious valleys, mountain topography and a rustic peek into Balkan life, we were mesmerised by it all.

Within its vicinity, Trebinje has 3 religious palaces to share. **Tvrdoš** and **Gračanica** were the 2 we focused on. The former is a 15th century Serbian Orthodox, the grounds of which you can walk freely. The latter, which we called home for the night is a baby at just 2 years old. Although the staggering view at sunset is beyond beautiful and worth the drive up for that alone.

Trebinje itself is a gorgeous town and the most southerly in the country. Its quaintness belies its tempestuous past. With Serbian dominance until the Ottoman period, battles for this strategic land raged until the mid-90s. Yet now this peaceful, elegant riverside town is almost without a hint of its dark history.

Within its walled old-town that you could only describe as compact and bijou, nestled another café-culture that sedately embraced chilled out people-watchers. It had such a lovely vibe.

Just a mile up the river, is **Arslanagić Bridge**, also known as **Perović** which was built in 1574. Whilst it may be true that Stari Most in Mostar wins the prize for the most humble bridge in Bosnia,

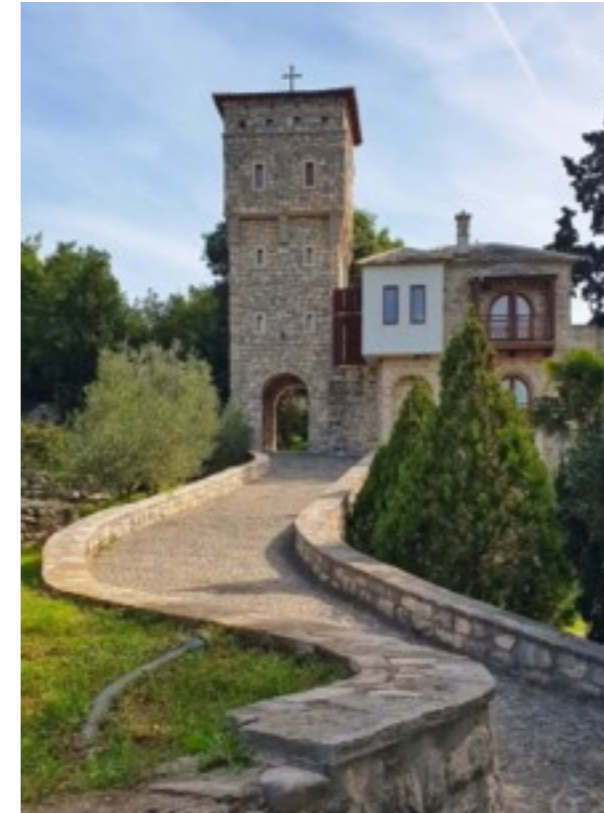


Arslanagić is perhaps the prettier and more architectural of the two. It was constructed over the river Trebišnjica; not just any old river. No this one is the *world's longest sinking river*. With its flow through a massive karst region in Bosnia and Herzegovina, much of its passage is actually underground. As it courses through **Trebinje** it sinks again, splitting into 3 different outflows, one of which appears at the Adriatic Sea at **Slano** - where we just happen to be staying as I write this section of the book.

The bridge has two names and two addresses. It is named after the toll keeper **Arslan-aga** who arrived in Trebinje in the 17th century. Although in 1993 it was renamed to **Perovića**. Originally the bridge was 10km further upstream although after a flood the bridge was relocated, brick by brick to salvage its heritage. This took six years and now is an important feature of this understated town.

If you drive to the monastery that overlooks the valley, you will get a stupendous view of the bridge and the river as it winds its way through Trebinje and on towards Croatia. An off-the-beaten track visit for sure.

The road south towards Dubrovnik and the Croatian border gave us one last hurrah as yet more mountains greeted us and bade us farewell, imploring us to return soon.



OUR INTERACTIVE MAP & MASH UP

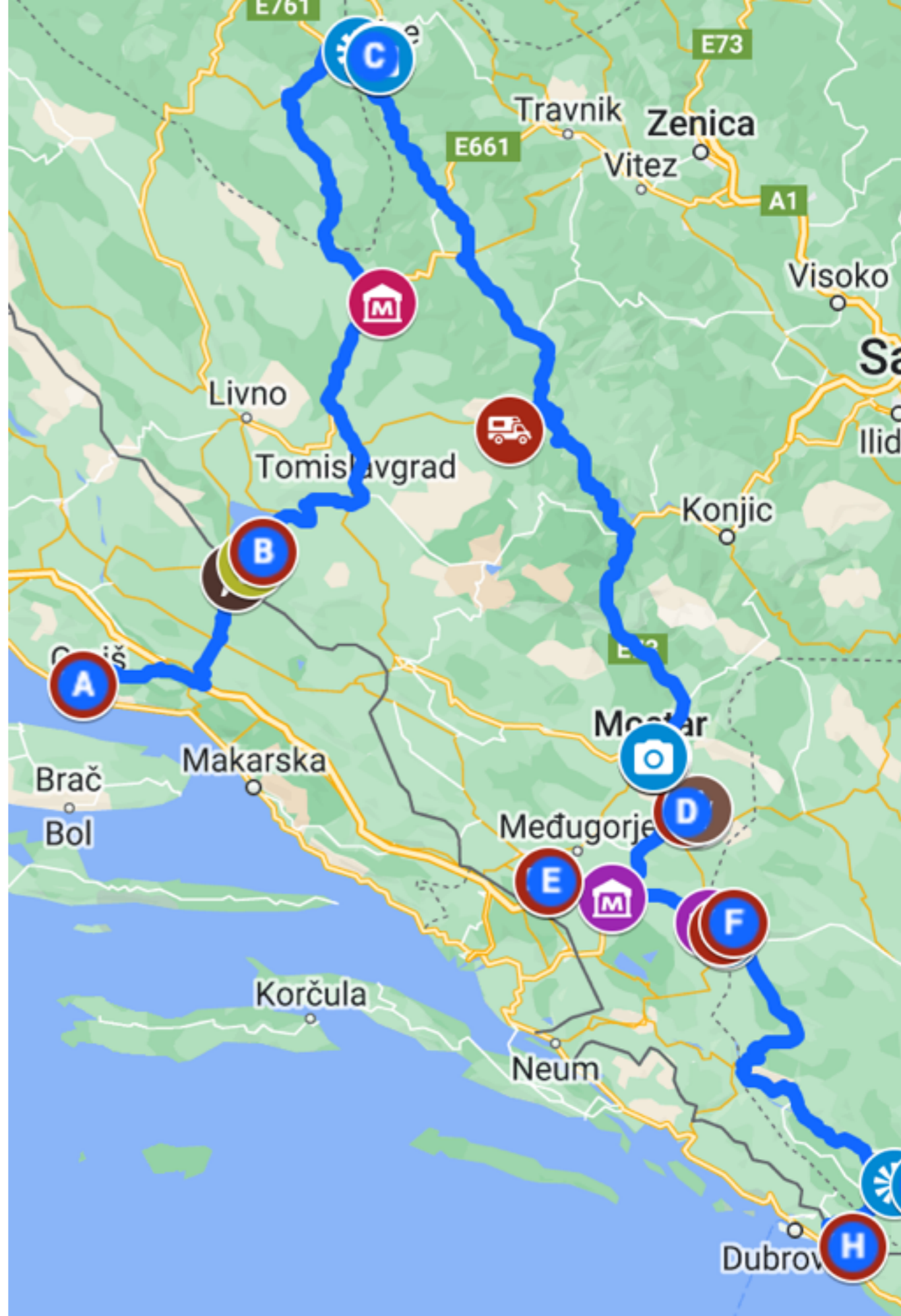
We have a couple of additional elements for you to continue our influence of your visit here.

Click on the map to the right to access our entry/exit points to BiH and get the route and places we stayed along the way.

As our visits to Bosnia increase over the years, we will add to this map. Although for now, we hope this will be a good inaugural trip for you too.

And on top of that, click the image below to see Bosnia through our eyes and rolling tyres.

We hope that these interactive resources may just give you the inspiration to come.





6 BIH PRACTICALITIES

Whilst our inaugural trip may well have been short and sweet, we amassed a great deal of knowledge in the time.

In this short section we aim to share those experiences, arming you with the knowledge and confidence to map out your own Bosnian tour.

From internet, to insurance and camping options, it's all here for you to begin your own research. Remember that everything is accurate at the time of writing (October 2022).

Before you go - Research

I rarely invest too much time these days in planning as our choices tend to bend with the wind and the sun! That said, when we go to a brand new territory, research is a traveller's essential companion. Travel should be rich and insightful not grazed with 'if only's' and 'wish I had's'.

Given our trip was very last minute, albeit we knew would go at some point - I relied on the internet to give me the information I needed to plan a seamless road-trip. I created a [Top 10 Checklist](#) for all the things you need to consider prior to your visit, so click on the image below for a detailed breakdown into our pre-visit list. Also we recommend that you check your Government's travel website for the latest information on their country advice. Here is the [UK link](#).



1. Crossing into Bosnia & Herzegovina

Bar a 5.5m stretch of coastline at Neum, Bosnia is 99% landlocked so you will nearly always enter by land rather than sea. Either Croatia, as in our case, Montenegro or Serbia.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has a 579 mile (932 km) border with **Croatia** to the north and southwest, a 222 mile (357 km) border with **Serbia** to the east and a 155 mile (249 km) border with **Montenegro** to the southeast. Each country has their own border controls so you need to explore your entry point depending upon your originating country.

Click on the map below for an interactive look at each of the borders. Don't be put off by a message saying 'run away'. Just click that button and it will take you to this map and you just hover your cursor over the relevant border lines. For a list of Croatian borders, click [here](#).



2. Bosnian Borders - what to expect

When approaching the border, you will go through two controls. The first is your country of origin. If they don't automatically do it for you, ask them to stamp your passports. It could be important for Schengen. A short way down the road you will see a Bosnian Border Control where they will re-examine your passports and do another stamp. Now your Schengen clock stops ticking.

Depending on which crossing you choose, other paperwork may be needed, such as *vehicle documents* or *travel insurance*; none were needed at our crossings at **Aržano** and **Ivanica**. We also had no queues. In fact we were the only vehicles passing. I think we gave them a break to their boredom!

We were not searched, not asked for any additional paperwork nor asked about bringing in any goods. So it was all very simple.



If you need vehicle insurance, bear in mind that **NOT all crossings have an Insurance booth. They will need to call into the nearest town for a broker to arrive. So this may take some time to sort out. Also tourist borders at Doljani and either side of the Neum Corridor get very busy, so factor this in too.**

Don't forget that if you find yourself wanting to cross from Montenegro into Croatia and head north, the **Neum Corridor** means passing through border control for Bosnia, which can mean long delays. If Bosnia isn't on your list (and why not?) then use the newly opened **Pelješki Most** bridge allowing you to avoid this contentious territory. You can read about the bridge [here](#).

3. Vehicle Insurance

Be sure to check your vehicle insurance policy to ensure that you are covered. We are with Comfort and Bosnia and Herzegovina is on our insured and breakdown cover list. Just make sure that you have these documents and the Green Card printed out in case you are asked for it at the Border. If you are not, for some reason covered, then you can buy insurance at the International Border Controls.

4. Travel Insurance

My research threw up the need for Travel Insurance as an entry requirement for Bosnia. Now many country borders in Europe state this, especially now we have left the club. Although we have never been asked for this documentation. However given we were going into new territory and with an uncertain infrastructure, we decided we needed more than our GHIC. So we arranged health cover with [True Traveller](#) (others like Big Cat and World Nomads are available) as we are able to arrange cover over the phone/online without being in our home country. For £66 for us both we were able to get cover for 7 days. We actually stayed longer although decided against extending the policy after seeing the country with our own eyes.

5. Internet coverage

Please check with your phone supplier whether you have a *Worldwide coverage package* or just Europe. If you only have the latter, then any calls, texts or data usage in BiH will come under International Roaming and you will be charged a fortune. We found out too late and it cost us £40 in additional charges, assuming that our 02 package would cover us. Rooky mistake.

So buy a SIM card immediately you arrive. More on this later.





All things driving

One of the main questions we are asked when we travel to new territory is ‘what are the roads like and how are the drivers?’ Both important questions when you are carrying your home with you. Certainly road conditions and drivers can be the make or break of a holiday, as we found when we travelled through Italy.

So let’s start off with some affirmation of the Bosnian infrastructure. First of all Bosnian roads are on the whole excellent. They are certainly better than Italy, Ireland and the UK put together. There are some small local roads that are a bit ropey although we only experienced a few of these during our 11 days.

In fact their infrastructure is building rapidly. New link roads are being created and current roads being upgraded. So if you experience anything, it might just be a resurfacing project. Otherwise we are happy to report excellent roads even through the mountains. The roads are wide enough and we experienced very few, ‘squeaky bum’ moments, unlike our trip to Ireland. The other question is the **quality of the drivers**.

Again, generally speaking we had no issues on our road trip. We had a couple of idiots overtaking in crazy places, although this is no different to any other country around the world. So nothing much else needs to be said.

Highway Rules

Let's clarify for our British love of rules the Highway requirements for Bosnia.

- In Bosnia-Herzegovina you must drive on the **right-hand side** of the road, and overtake on the left.
- If you're caught **committing a driving offence** while driving through Bosnia-Herzegovina, you'll be given an **on-the-spot fine**.
- Use of **speed camera detectors is prohibited**.
- The **drink-driving limit is 0.05%**.
- Anyone **under the influence of alcohol can't sit in the front seat, even as a passenger**.
- You must use **dipped headlights** at all times.
- If you're **involved in an accident**, you must wait until the police arrive.
- On **mountain roads**, you have right of way going uphill.
- You must **stop at pedestrian crossings**, as soon as someone shows they want to cross, although locals don't abide by this.
- Make sure you carry your **V5** and your insurance documents.
- Have a **UK sticker** on the back of your van as we would normally have for trips to EU.

- **Dial 122** for an emergency situation or accident and of course contact your EU Breakdown supplier where necessary.
- For an **ambulance call 124**.

Road Signs

The road signs are not that different to Croatia or any other country in the Europe zone. The only things to be aware of is that Bosnia use both the Latin and Cyrillic alphabets. The signs are always in both though, so there's no worries there.

For a good website listing all the road signs that you will encounter, click this [link](#).



Speed limits

There are speed limits on all roads. Road signs on both sides indicate when the speed limit will change.

- Towns and cities: 60 km/h
- Open Roads: 100 km/h
- Motorways: 130 km/h

Roads in Bosnia

As we have mentioned the roads in Bosnian are pretty good. Whilst we did travel on one that had a big chunk taken out of it, it was up in the mountains of the north and easy enough to navigate around.

Some other roads we travelled were still being constructed so it was a short period of rough driving, although for no more than 5 minutes, if that.



Around the country there is evidence of new link roads and bridges being built so whilst the infrastructure is good, it is getting better every year it seems.

There are three main road types in Bosnia.

- There are the **Motorways** called **Autoceste**,
- **Main** roads (with M-19 as an example)
- and **Regional** roads. These are a bit more ropey with a few potholes and adverse cambers to contend with although nothing so bad that we felt unsafe. In fact they were no worse than some of the roads we encounter in the UK. They are just a little raw at the edges.

Motorways & Tolls

We didn't travel on any motorways on this journey, although there are few we need to alert you to in case you head towards Sarajevo in particular. The total length of the BiH motorway network as of 2022 is 145 miles so there really isn't much to say about them. Although for the routes that you will see in the table over the page, there are tolls payable. *Image courtesy of www.worldmetres.info*

Toll rates in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The toll is charged based on the distance between two toll stations depending on your vehicle category.

Toll rates of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2021

Motorway	Passenger cars	Trucks
Sarajevo – Tarčin	€1,08	€3,23
Sarajevo – Lepenica	€0,52	€1,72
Lepenica – Tarčin	€0,52	€1,72
Zenica – Sarajevo	€2,58	€7,96
Medjugorje – Ljubušky	€0,52	€1,72

Motorways in Bosnia and Herzegovina are called
Autoceste



Diesel and LPG

There is one thing we can say about BiH, they certainly know how to do Petrol Stations. There seems to be one every five miles or so. We had only crossed the border for 10 minutes and we came across one, in the middle of nowhere. They are building new stations all the time and they are swanky too. We rarely saw a rough looking Petrol Station in the 400 miles we covered.

Plus in a large majority of cases they sell LPG as standard. So unlike other countries in Europe, Bosnia beats them all, hands down. September 2022 diesel prices ranged from 3.26M when we arrived to 3.16M when we left, which equates to roughly £1.46-£1.41 and 1.46M for LPG which is around 65p.





All Things Camping

When coming in to a new country, after practicalities like insurance and safety, our next priority tends to be 'where can we call home.' Part of my due diligence before we visited Bosnia was to make sure that we had plenty of options and explore whether off-grid was legal. I was pleasantly surprised by our options.

Campsites

Bosnia has campsites although not as large, formal or as structured as we experienced in Croatia. May be they just don't have the numbers of visitors to justify it just now.

Autocamps

The camps we stayed on were rustic although lovely and more than adequate for our needs.

There are no luxuries like swimming pools or kids' playgrounds, if that's what you need. Although their facilities are all a good standard. Hot showers, often with laundry facilities and best of all, the biggest welcome you will ever experience. The Bosnians are such kind, generous and warm hosts that you really won't want to leave some of these places. Don't be surprised if you get free wine, cake or fruit when you arrive. And you will often be invited to join the host for a beer or a coffee. It is so endearing and we loved how at home they made us feel. Nothing was ever too much trouble.

You arrive, set up, be entertained and pay when you leave. Either in Euros or Bosnia Marks. Often Kuna were also accepted.

There are some overnighers that are just entrepreneurial homeowners who have opened up their gardens with space for a couple of vans, which we loved. We had one night at a Hostel that had some land that they had turned into a camping with facilities. We love that people are looking for ways to earn money and we were happy to oblige. It's a perfect win win.

Wild Camping - off grid homes

Whilst we found nothing to say that off-grid camping was prohibited or illegal, the normal rules apply. If it is high season and there are no camping signs then abide by those rules. Out of season everyone is much more relaxed.

Again in high season you might find that unofficial 'community members' pop along around 8.00pm to collect a fee from you. We didn't encounter that given the time of year we visited, although reports on Park4Night did suggest that this practice was commonplace in the summer.

In our 11 days/10 nights we had 3 that were off-grid, mostly due to a lack of other camping options available. Although we preferred to give our money to locals and their businesses than to 'do it cheap'. Some of our European neighbours are always looking for a freebie although off-grid camping doesn't have that value for us. It's not about cheap it's about choice, beauty and views. Although

in Bosnia investing in the country by using their campsites felt absolutely the right thing to do.

We predominantly used [Park4Night](#) for our stopovers. As of yet there are not too many places on [Search for Sites](#), although we added a few new ones and, I'm sure as more of us enter this new territory, increased submissions will head their way.

Please support local businesses and communities by paying for campsites where you can.

Landmines and off-grid camping

One final word to mention here are **landmines**. And this relates of course to off-grid camping as well as walking in the BiH countryside. Whilst your own reading about the situation may put you off visiting altogether, in reality the risk is low as long as you take sensible measures and don't go off piste.

Whilst the grips of war are long gone, 25 years of healing hasn't yet felt its full presence. There are warnings about veering onto land that looks disused and unkempt. Although we didn't see any on our trip, **Landmine Warning signs** are present in the parts of the country where they were most prevalent. So please take caution in your choice of overnights and don't go far off the beaten track whilst walking.



Shopping and Food

We didn't need to do very much shopping whilst we were visiting, as this trip was just a dipping of the proverbial toe. That said, I did want to do a shopping expedition, for research purposes you understand! Myles just wanted wine and beers and that was the end of it!

The biggest store we kept coming across was Bingo. It was huge and had the most impressive range of kitchen, cooking and homeware products, on top of all the foods you could imagine. I bought Apricot Kernels which I can't get in the UK any longer. I even managed to find Slimline Tonic which is almost impossible to buy in Croatia. So I stocked up, needless to say.

There are a handful of Lidl's around, many of which are centred around Sarajevo and Konzum is also here, similar to Croatia. So there are plenty of shopping options.

Bosnian food is all about carbohydrates, protein and cabbage - lots and lots of cabbage, especially in the autumn. We saw loads of local producers in the mountains with their road-side stalls selling enormous nets, grown in their plentiful cabbage patches.

Bosnians are also big meat eaters which they combine with a combination of mash, rice, dumplings and pasta, often all on one plate. So if like a low-carb diet, it is tricky to eat out.



DIY Emergencies

Like Croatia, most large towns will have a handyman store, although if you are needing something a bit more robust then you will most likely need to head towards Sarajevo where stores like **OBI, Dalma or Elektro-Metal** will probably sort you out.

Every day shopping

Sarajevo seems to offer the greatest number of shopping outlets for clothes and sports gear. For gifts or more local branded clothes, then every town has a regular market where these items can be bought for a reasonably cheap price. Also handbags and shoes can often be bought in places like Mostar although just watch the prices which will be heavily loaded for tourists.

Laundry

Campsites are your best bet for getting your laundry done. Camping Blagaj just outside Mostar didn't even charge for doing our laundry.

Currency

Bosnia and Herzegovina have the BAM currency (Bosnian Convertible Mark). It was actually only created in 1998. They refer to it as the Mark and there are 100 fenings to a Mark. At the time of

writing 1BAM = €0.51 and 0.45p. So halve the price for a rough exchange rate.

You can use your credit card (fees will apply) or pre-load your multi-currency cards like Revolut or Caxton. Whilst they won't include the BAM, it will take payment from your Euro balance. We used cards in supermarkets and petrol stations. Campsites want cash and will generally take anything; Euros, Kuna or Marks.

Ziraat ATMs allow free cash withdrawals. All other ATMs will charge a minimum of €5.

The phrase used often is; "This is Bosnia we will take anything!"



ATMs are everywhere although they are generally **Bankomat** who charge a whopping €5 per transaction. We got money out as soon as we crossed the border as we had very little Euro cash although plenty of Kuna. Then searched out the Ziraat ATM which offers free cash withdrawals. So use Google to find your nearest one.

When to visit Bosnia

First and foremost Bosnia and Herzegovina is not a Schengen member so they offer us a great **Schengen Shuffle** option. With Croatia expected to join on 1st January 2023 this removes another Shuffle destination for us Brits. So BiH becomes a very viable option and was one of the reasons for our visit. Having experienced a very positive 11 day road-trip, we are completely confident and enthused about returning to extend our time travelling outside of the UK.

In terms of what weather to expect, I can only talk theoretically as we didn't experience enough of a range of days to answer this question authentically. At the end of September into early October, we had some lovely weather. Initially it was a bit grey and stormy, although the second half of our visit we had temperatures of 23°.

Bosnia is 45% mountains, so this brings with it a unique weather pattern. As we drove south from **Jajce**, you could see local communities preparing for winter with their wood-stores full and their winter-staple cabbages. Winter is harsh in the mountains and can experience snow. In Kupres just an hour from the Croatian border at Aržano there is a Ski Resort! That says it all really.

Further south the climate is influenced by the Mediterranean so it is hot and dry in the summer and during the autumn it can still offer some lovely warm days just cooler nights.

So the best times to come, we can deduce are the shoulder seasons if you don't like too much heat and the summer months if you do. Unless you enjoy the cold or skiing then the winter is best avoided and likely not an ideal winter destination.

What to pack

Whenever you come, pack mosquito resistance cream as they are like ninjas from July through to October.

For Bosnia there's nothing additional to pack than you might for any other country. So our standard list below should do the trick....

- Pack good **walking boots**.
- Grab your **camera**, binoculars and your travel journal.
- **Rucksack** or three.
- **Climbing and fishing gear** as it's a great country for both.
- **Swimming gear** as the rivers & lakes are great for wild swimming.
- If you are **vegan** we suggest bring some supplies as we didn't see many vegan option in the supermarkets.
- **Bicycles or scooter** will be very handy.

Bringing pets to Bosnia

From our research we can see that bringing your pets with you to Bosnia is not a problem as long as you follow the standard Microchip, Vaccination and Titre tests used by EU countries. We have added a link [here](#) for you so you can do your own homework prior to visiting.

We saw plenty of pets with travellers whilst we were there, yet sadly one of BiH's scars of war is the legacy of stray animals, dogs in particular. We recognise that this might be a cause of concern for many.

Whilst it is not as big an issue in Bosnia as in Greece, Bulgaria and Romania, it does exist, especially in Sarajevo we understand. There are no packs that we witnessed, though this may be different on the streets of the capital. Generally we saw the odd pair of dogs roaming in the mountains or on the streets of a town. The animals we saw seemed well nourished and some had tags.

Animal Welfare standards in Bosnia and Herzegovina and other Balkan countries are not as high as we are used to in the UK and western Europe, although is being addressed.

It appears that the problem has improved over the last few years since the introduction in 2009 of the **Animal Protection and**

Welfare Act although there seems to be, much like in many of their neighbouring countries, a lack of financial resources and consistency of approach to tackle the issue. There is a scheme in Sarajevo for the adoption of stray street dogs, although as yet this hasn't stretched to other cantons.

Stray animals can be hard to witness coming from countries where animal ownership values differ. Of course it is a personal choice whether you can cope with those challenges either as a pet owner or animal lover. Our philosophy is that if we can visit and invest our money into the country, then that is a progressive act which, in time, will help the country tackle social issues such as strays.

Communicating

Data and Telephone Connectivity

Most UK phone suppliers won't cover BiH unless you have paid for International Coverage. We have 25GB per month each with O2 and we also have a **Lobster card** that we bought in Spain, neither of which we could use in BiH. O2 wanted to charge us over £7 per MG of data with a cap of £51, which I pretty much used up in 20 mins. Whilst I had already discovered that I couldn't use Lobster here, I had foolishly thought that BiH would be included in my Travel Package with O2.

Please check with your supplier whether you have coverage in BiH. If not, have no fear - you can buy a **Tourist Sim** as below. We bought 2 cards during our 11 days for a total of £19 which more than lasted us. You can buy them almost anywhere, including garages, cafés, newspaper kiosks and Post Offices.



Most campsites do supply WIFI although unless you are very close to the reception or house then it will be very sketchy. So your internet activity will be reduced whilst you're here, although for us that was no big issue as long as family and friends could stay in touch. I did warn mum that we may not be in touch so regularly and not to worry - we would check in as regularly as we could. And with the SIM cards, that allowed us to do that daily. We had no connectivity issues throughout our trip.

Getting by in Bosnian

The Balkan tongue can be a tricky one, especially if you are used to a Latin spectrum of languages like French, Italian and Spanish. That said, there are a handful of phrases that you can use in Croatia and Bosnia which will be truly appreciated. These were my key phrases.

Dobar Dan/Zdravo	Hello formal/informal
Molim/hvala	Please/thank you
Mogu li....	Can I....
....dobiti have
...ostatistay
...platitipay
Dovidenja (pronounced dovigenia)	Good bye formally
Ćao	Bye informally, as in Italian
Jedan, dva, tri, četiri, pet	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Govoriš li engleski? (š is sh)	Do you speak English?
Da, ne	Yes, No!



Bosnian Lifestyle

To give you a flavour of this sensory delight and the culture you will experience, here are some highlights.

1. Bosnia has a real **café culture**. Every town or city we visited had cafés galore. You really are spoiled for choice.
2. Whilst talking cafés, let's not forget that Bosnia is a country that love their carbs; cakes, biscuits, snacks and **Baklava**. Brought over by the Ottomans this is a speciality here. So why not team it up with a Turkish tea or a **Bosnian Kafa**. This is a really strong Espresso style coffee which is heavenly, even as a non coffee drinker, my wee taster was earthy and full of flavour.
3. If you want really good meat, Bosnia is the place to get it. They love their protein. A **Mesnica** is their Butcher. If you want great bread then a **Pakara** is their bakery selling all sorts of pastries and bread of course.
4. Another staple is **Ćevapičići**. It's a minced meat sausage served with a red pepper and aubergine sauce, often seen as street food.





5. Life is very chilled in Bosnia. There seems little reason for go fast anywhere, except if you're a lorry on a delivery or stuck behind a motorhome of course! Otherwise, take your time and stop for coffee and lunch. You will get caught up in that laid back approach especially at campsites; you start with a day and suddenly find yourself staying four.

6. With only a population of 3.8 million in a 20,000sqm area dominated by mountains and forest, **Bosnia is pretty quiet** as witnessed by our empty roads. Arterial links with Sarajevo tended to be a bit busier although not by much.

7. **Tourist Tat** stalls plague many cities and visitor hotspots and this is certainly true in Bosnia. If you want a pair of flip flops or a Sponge Bob Square Pants toy then you're in luck. Otherwise if you shop cleverly there are some amazing bargains to be had.

8. Everyone is **warm and hospitable** and especially if you try speaking a little bit to Bosnian tongue, they will adore you forever.



Our Bosnian Road-Trip Spends

Spending	Price in £	Comments
Food	122	
Diesel	88	Prices during our visit were 3.16M - £1.42 per litre
Campsites	85	Based on 7 nights in campsites and 3 off-grid
Eating out	34	One lunch and one evening meal
Laundry	free	Camping Blagaj, Mostar
Internet	19	This bought us 35GB which lasted us 11 days
Travel Insurance	66	Arranged with True Traveller with 7 day coverage
Entertainment/Entry Fees	30	
Total spend	444	This equates to £40 per day all inclusive. This is difficult to compare to other country road-trips given the shortness of our inaugural trip.



THE EFFECTS OF WAR

This is not a section I relish including, yet it feels necessary. Necessary because of the shade the media have coloured our minds with in their coverage of the war from 1992-95 and the perception that we have therefore formed in our minds as a result.

There is no doubting that Croatia has healed more quickly than Bosnia and I suspect this has been driven by tourism, given this country's stunning coastline. And the effects of that strategy are clear to see.

Not so in the poorer, mostly mountainous and forested neighbour of Bosnia. Without a sexy coastal appeal, Bosnia has suffered more in the war's aftermath than Croatia. And I don't say this out of any

political inference; it is just based on what we witnessed in both countries as a side by side comparison.

So what does this mean in reality to those of us who wish to make the trip there? Especially given the Schengen Shuffle potential.

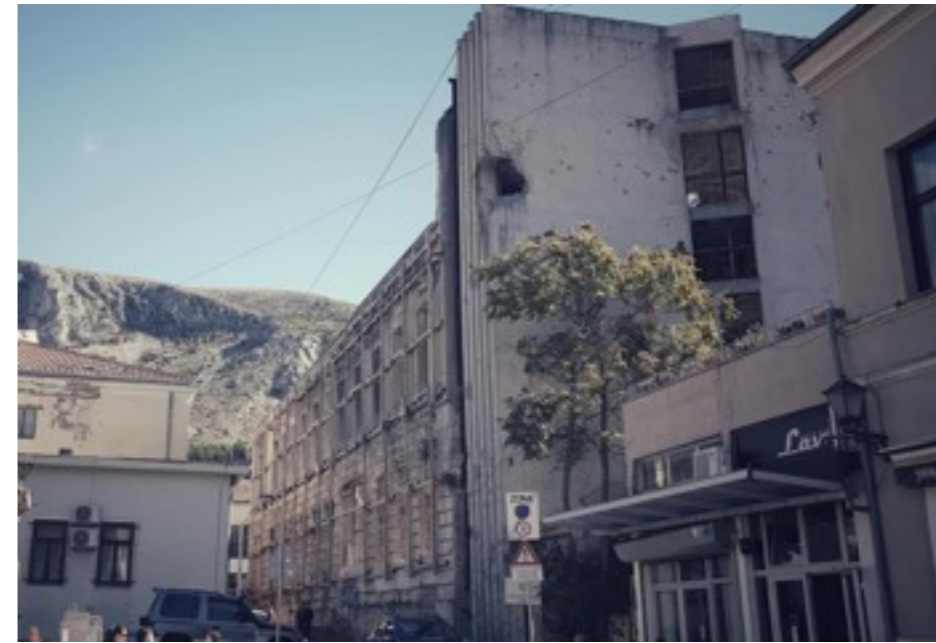
Firstly, I think it is important to say that Bosnia is not the scary, delapidated backwater country that we might imagine or have been led to believe. It is rebuilding, progressive and creating new infrastructure everywhere. Despite being economically weaker than Croatia, funding support is partnering with Bosnia. We saw new bridges, motorways, major routes connecting communities; and that's on top of a pretty good road network that is already in place.

Secondly, as a place to explore in a motorhome, Bosnia and Herzegovina is an intriguing, picturesque and historically fascinating place to tour. On top of that it felt safe to call home. We were met with only warmth or mild curiosity when driving through the more remote mountain cantons.

Ok so now let's talk about the elephant in the room; a topic that a lot of people have asked us about any. **The Bosnian War**. Now this is not a topic for the locals as they are still healing and it's a sensitive topic. The families we met, the realisation that everyone of them had a son, father, brother or uncle who had been involved in the war in some way is the stark reality. In our lifetime this makes for a shocking acknowledgment.

With 50% of the population displaced, the war hit them hard. We saw bullet holes, mortar shell cavities and homes ruined by the four year battle. And the first time you set eyes on those scars it brings you from a beauty struck state right back down to earth, firmly with a bump. Unless you are under thirty, you will have some recollection of the news reports, the tabloid articles and the general wave of horror when a war in our era was right on the doorstep. As mid-twenty year olds focused on the challenges of our new lives together, the news was a base level hum. Snippets hit home occasionally, peppered through our young, newly married lives.

It is only when we became full-time explorers that the full extent of the war hit home. Travel has made us so much more observant, sensitive and curious about cultures, traditions and a county's history, warts and all. So Bosnia in the 90's was a country certainly out of reach or out of bounds more to the point. Too dangerous. Too far away. Too aggressive.



Whilst there are scars, human and structural, Bosnia is recovering and finding a way to put tragic events behind them. There is though the reality of landmines to consider.

There are an estimated 180,000 mines still buried, as predicted by **Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Centre** and an area of roughly 600 square miles across the country. Progress is being made on clearing the mines yet there's still some work to do.

The regions of danger are clearly marked with warning signs; the general advice though is to avoid camping and walking in any undesignated or well trodden areas. We saw no signs nor evidence of mine issues whilst we were in the country although being mindful is the key.

The best way of reducing any anxiety you might have is to download **The Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Suspected Areas** which is the property of **BH Mine Action Centre**, and developed as part of the "Country Assessment of Mine Suspected Areas" and "EU Support to the Creation of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Centre's (BHMACE) Information System Web Platform" projects.

It can be downloaded from [Google App](#) and [Apple Store](#).

It's a good little app that shows you where the mines are roughly located.



I'm not sure why if they can locate them on a map for an app, why they can't then deal with them. Although it is not for me to question their handling of the mine decommissioning. The map doesn't make for pretty viewing although it does give some aspect of comfort if you are concerned about knowing where they are located.



In our experience, there is no cause for concern, just be aware and stick to the main routes. Tourism, whilst slow compared to many countries, is seeing a steady increase as more people around the world, Europe in particular, start to see the offerings from this beautiful country. Up to September 2022, tourism was up 153% on the previous year.

So this is becoming a more popular destination with Sarajevo and Mostar high on visitors' lists and whilst many of these may only be on day trips from Croatia, Tour Companies would not come if they didn't think it was safe to do so.



7 CAMPING OPTIONS

Bosnia and Herzegovina is surprisingly well set up for camping. With Autocamps, some wild spots and official campsites you will not go wanting. You are welcomed with a smile, gestures of good willing and a reasonably good-value price. Camping here is a delight especially out of season.

You can access all of our overnight stops and the route we took through this [Interactive Map](#).



Here's all of our overnight stops to whet your appetite. Although please use as many campsites as possible and put the money into the local community.

1. Buško Blato Plaza (43.633384, 17.038177)

A fabulous place to overnight where the peace was palpable. Don't drive onto the beach though as it is very soft gravel and you will sink. Reports do suggest that someone in high season will ask you for €10 although no one visited us in September.



2. Jajce Hostel Autocamp (44.340949, 17.261902)

This Hostel is a great campsite charging €12 for a fully serviced pitch. Just a 10 minute walk to the town and the waterfalls. You must pay cash, either Euros or BAM.



3. Franjusic camping apartment, Šćit - (43.806791, 17.531026)

A small autocamp in Marko's front garden with views across the reservoir. There's room for 3 vans and he will sort you out with laundry if you need it, EHU, water and showers in the apartment. For just €10 or 20 BAM. The Monastery is a 2 minute walk and is a pretty unique place as it is the only monastery that predates Ottoman rule.



4. Autocamp Blagaj, nr Mostar - (43.257074, 17.879309)

A really lovely campsite that has been established for 15 years, run by a warm and generous host. You will have a welcome drink, cake and fruit sat by the river and a bottle of free wine when you arrive. In September €15pn all inclusive. A short distance to Blagaj and the Dervish House and a bus ride into Mostar.



5. Overnight Parking, Krivica Falls - (43.15837, 17.607275)

Parking on the right before the waterfall entrance. Asked permission if we could stay despite the 'no camping' sign. Out of season, no problem. Bins although no other services.



6. Camping Heaven in Nature, Stolac (43.09739, 17.975215)

A rustic and eclectic site in the mountains about 2 miles from Stolac. Lovely spot for €15 per night with services except grey waste. Possibility to swim in the river.



7. Gračnica Monastery, Trebinje - (42.711452, 18.360947)

In the lower car park by the toilets, you can park in the Bus parking spaces late in the afternoon after the tourists have gone. Stunning sunsets and views. There's a lovely cafe in the grounds overlooking the valley.





8 TOP TIPS SUMMARY

Bosnia and Herzegovina has been a delight and a surprise. We have been so influenced by the media's portrayal of this profound country that it has fear often running through our veins. Fears of landmines, war pockets and destruction prevented us from even thinking this far ahead. I even remember the prospect of travelling from Greece to Italy along the 'road route' and being uncomfortable with the whole Albania, Bosnia and Montenegro option.

Although now after just a mere 11 days, I have been filled with admiration and confidence and we hope we can do the same for you in this mini eBook.



TOP TIPS SUMMARY FOR BOSNIA

1. Before visiting Bosnia make sure you do your **checks on Van Insurance and Health Cover** so you know which border you need to cross at.
2. **Make sure you have plenty of Euros with you** as this is a regular feature of buying power alongside Kuna and BAM.
3. Make sure your **passport is stamped** both leaving your originating country and your arrival in Bosnia.
4. If you are concerned about landmines, then **download the Landmines App**.
5. **Most campsites prefer cash** rather than card payments. In fact most establishments want cash. Supermarkets and petrol stations you can pay by card.
6. Avoid **off-grid camping or walking** on unmarked land.
7. **Learn a few words of Bosnian**. Most locals speak a little English although don't rely on it.
8. **We suggest wearing helmets whilst cycling**. Mostly the drivers are respectful although cycling is not a common-place mode of transport in Bosnia.
9. **Autocamps and campsites are frequently available** in most places. Although wild camping whilst not illegal should be kept to a minimum so that we can support the economy.
10. **Booking of campsites is not necessary at this point**, although as BiH becomes more popular, during July and August it is worth calling ahead. A lot of sites do have an ACSI inspection.

- 11.If a campsite **host offers you a coffee**, beer or cake, it is polite to accept it. It is a practice that is part of their cultural traditions. They will not accept payment, so don't try. If you feel you want to, then bake your host something or if they have produce for sale, then buy something from them.
- 12.**If you are visiting a city**, much like anywhere in the world, stay outside of the suburbs and take public transport.
- 13.Look for a **Ziraat ATM** as they offer commission-free money withdrawal.
14. Use **Search for Sites and Park4Night** for places to stay. There are plenty of options around the country.
- 15.Bosnia and Herzegovina are **not in the Schengen Zone** so can offer an extension to our Schengen allowance travels. Remember though, as with every other country, you can only stay for 90 days without a visa.
- 16.**Whilst visiting try a Bosnian Kafa.** Even as a non-coffee drinker, I thought it was an incredible taste and very authentically Bosnian.
- 17.Also if you are a meat lover, then try the **Cevapačići dish**. It's often served as street food or you can order it in a restaurant.
- 18.**There's little recycling** that goes on in the country. You may see the odd 'plastic' waste bin, although it is not used or respected. In fact rubbish is a problem in the country.
- 19.Never fear of running out of **Petrol or LPG**. There are plenty of stations all over the country and more being built. LPG particularly is profuse.
- 20.Your **phone and data package will be on International Roaming** whilst in BiH. So either buy a SIM for your phone if you will need to make regular calls or buy one for your MIFI so that you can hot spot to it. They can be purchased in garages, newspaper kiosks, supermarkets and some cafes.
- 21.**Cabbages** are big in Bosnia especially in winter. Do buy one and try out some local recipes.
- 22.**If visiting Mosques and other religious places**, ladies must wear clothes to cover up below the knees and arms/shoulders/neck. We would suggest a head covering. For the gents, no shorts are allowed in Mosques. You are able to use their provided coverings if you wish to visit and have come unprepared.

Follow these guidelines and you'll not go wrong with a Bosnian road-trip and you will definitely not be disappointed by what it can offer you. We hope you enjoy it as much as we did.



9 CLOSING THOUGHTS

Bosnia was so much more than I expected, far exceeded my hopes and soon became one of our new passions when influencing other travellers to come.

Much like their Balkans neighbours, there seems a reticence about travelling to Bosnia by plane or motorhome, although it is absolutely worth making the trip. You too will be surprised by what you see.

With an authentic and raw feel to it, Bosnia will show you all sides to her culture and it will enrich you forever.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is one of those countries to keep an eye on. Tourist confidence is growing there's no doubt and they are embracing it all.

In 10 year's time it will be a top spot destination with its lush forest hills, gargantuan mountains and topaz coloured lakes and rivers. History ancient and recent will fascinate all scholars and the hospitality shown by the locals will make you feel at home.

The ease with which you can tour this country makes this very much a Schengen Shuffle destination. With Croatia joining the 'Club' we are on the search for new places we can come to explore and savour their culture and traditions. And I think we may just have found one.

We hope that this mini-guide, which we will be expanding with each visit we plan, entices you to go and visit.

If you have any questions, why not drop us an email at themotoroamers@gmail.com or check out the website for all our blogs and vlogs <https://www.motoroaming.com>.

Karen, Myles and Scoobie

