

Bosnia & Hercegovina

Once known for tragic reasons, Bosnia and Hercegovina now features in travel plans as people realise what this country has to offer: age-old cultures, stunning mountain landscapes, access to the great outdoors and a sense of adventure. This most easterly point of the West and the most westerly point of the East bears the imprint of two great empires. Five hundred years of domination, first by the Turks and then briefly by the Austria-Hungarians, have inexorably influenced the culture and architecture of this land.

In Sarajevo, minarets, onion-shaped domes and campaniles jostle for the sky in a town where Muslims, Jews, Orthodox Christians and Catholics once lived in harmony. Alluring Baščaršija is a jumble of cobbled laneways spanning centuries of activity. Here workshops for ancient crafts are mixed in with cafés, souvenir shops, and trendy bars. There's also plenty to lure visitors away from the capital. Mostar's Old Bridge has been rebuilt and daring young men now plunge from its heights to amuse the tourists. Small Jajce delights with its medieval citadel and waterfall while Međugorje attracts thousands to its Virgin Mary apparition site.

Most likely it'll be in adventure sports where Bosnia and Hercegovina will make its name. Already its major rivers are rafted and kayaked and its mountains are skied, climbed and hiked over, and as more out-of-the-way areas are made safe this country could easily become the year-round adventure centre of Mediterranean Europe.

FAST FACTS

- **Area** 51,129 sq km
- **Capital** Sarajevo
- **Currency** convertible mark (KM);
A\$1 = 1.16KM; €1 = 1.96KM; ¥100 = 1.38KM;
UK£1 = 2.84KM; US\$1 = 1.55KM
- **Famous for** the bridge at Mostar, 1984 Winter Olympics
- **Official Languages** Bosniak, Croatian and Serbian
- **Phrases** *zdravo* (hello), *hvala* (thanks), *molim* (please), *dovidjenja* (goodbye)
- **Population** 3.85 million (2003 estimate)
- **Telephone Codes** country code ☎ 387; international access code ☎ 00





HIGHLIGHTS

- Take coffee with the locals in the old Turkish quarter of **Sarajevo** (p93).
- Watch the locals jump off Mostar's **Stari Most** (p102).
- Window-gaze on the **train** (p105) from Mostar to Sarajevo as it climbs the mountains via tunnels, viaducts and switchbacks.
- Raft the rolling Una River through gorges near **Bihac** (p111).
- Witness the pilgrims to **Medugorje** (p105), site of the Virgin Mary apparitions.

ITINERARIES

- One week** Arrive in Mostar from coastal Croatia, roam the old town and take a

side trip to Medugorje before heading north to Sarajevo. Visitors often linger in Sarajevo, which could push this itinerary to 10 days.

- Two weeks** As above, but stay longer in Sarajevo, taking an organised tour into the mountains and visiting Travnik and Jajce on day tours. Bihac should certainly be on your itinerary for some rafting. Continue on to Montenegro via Banja Luka or take the train from Sarajevo to Budapest.

CLIMATE & WHEN TO GO

Bosnia and Herzegovina has a mix of Mediterranean and central European climates: it gets hot in summer but quite chilly in winter,

WARNING: LAND MINES

Hundreds of thousands of mines and unexploded ordnance make for danger wherever there were lines of confrontation, be it countryside or suburb. There is a continuing programme to clear away all these dangers but it will take many years.

The golden rules are: don't enter war-damaged and abandoned buildings; stay away from taped-off areas; keep away from places not used by local people; and use guides or go on organised tours when walking in the countryside.

What's safe? With the exception of war-damaged buildings, all highly populated areas, national parks and any area where there's strong evidence of people activity.

Only the experts have a full idea of where danger areas might be. If in doubt, contact Sarajevo's **Mine Action Centre** (☎ 033-253 800; www.bhmac.org; Zmaj od Bosne 8, Sarajevo; 🕒 8am-4pm Mon-Fri).

especially at elevations where snowfall can last until April.

The best time to visit is from May to September; skiers should come between December and February. Sarajevo temperatures range from minus 2°C in winter up to 27°C in July and August. Temperatures in the south will be several degrees warmer.

HISTORY

Bosnia has been a cultural cocktail from the beginning. People from all over the world – including Italy, Spain, Africa, Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt and Palestine – have at various times populated the areas of Dalmatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The region's ancient inhabitants were Illyrians, followed by the Romans who settled around the mineral springs at Ilidza near Sarajevo in AD 9. When the Roman Empire was divided in AD 395, the Drina River, today the border with Serbia, became the line dividing the Western Roman Empire from Byzantium.

The Slavs arrived in the late 6th and early 7th centuries. In 960 the region became independent of Serbia, only to pass through the hands of other conquerors: Croatia, Byzantium, Duklja (modern-day Montenegro) and Hungary. Bosnia's medieval history is a much-debated subject, mainly because different groups have tried to claim authenticity and territorial rights on the basis of their interpretation of the country's religious make-up before the arrival of the Turks. During this period (1180–1463) Bosnia and Herzegovina became one of the most powerful states in the Western Balkans. The most significant event was the expansion of the Bosnian state under Stephen Kotromanić who conquered large parts of the Dalmatian coast and in 1326 annexed the southern province of Herzegovina.

The country thus became Bosnia and Herzegovina for the first time.

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

Bosnia and Herzegovina was assimilated into the Ottoman Empire during the 400 years of Turkish rule. Islamicisation largely took place during the initial 150 years of Turkish rule and it's generally held that people converted voluntarily. Orthodox and Catholic Christians continued to practise their religions although under certain constraints.

As the Ottoman Empire declined elsewhere in the 16th and 17th centuries, the Turks strengthened their hold on Bosnia and Herzegovina as a bulwark against attack. Sparked

HOW MUCH?

- Short taxi ride 5KM
- Internet access 3KM per hour
- Coffee 1KM
- Slug of šljivovica 1.50KM
- Movie ticket 3.50KM

LONELY PLANET INDEX

- Litre of petrol 1.79KM
- Litre of water 2KM
- Half-litre of beer 2KM
- Souvenir T-shirt from 12KM
- Street snack (burek) 1.50KM

by the newly born idea of nationhood, the South Slavs rose against their Turkish occupiers in 1875–6.

In 1878 Russia inflicted a crushing defeat on Turkey in a war over Bulgaria and at the subsequent Congress of Berlin it was determined that Austria-Hungary would occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina despite the population's wish for autonomy.

The Austria-Hungarians pushed Bosnia and Herzegovina into the modern age with industrialisation, the development of coal mining and the building of railways and infrastructure. Ivo Andrić's *Bridge over the Drina* succinctly describes these changes in the town of Višegrad.

But political unrest was on the rise. Previously, Bosnian Muslims, Catholics and Orthodox Christians had only differentiated themselves from each other in terms of religion. But with the rise of nationalism in the mid-19th century, Bosnia's Catholic and Orthodox population started to identify themselves with neighbouring Croatia or Serbia respectively. At the same time, resentment against foreign occupation intensified and young people across the sectarian divide started cooperating with each other and working against the Austria-Hungarians, thus giving birth to the idea of 'Yugoslavism' (land of the southern Slavs).

Resentment against occupation intensified in 1908 when Austria annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina outright. The assassination of the Habsburg heir Archduke Franz Ferdinand by a Bosnian Serb, Gavrilo Princip, in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914 led Austria to declare war on Serbia. Russia and France supported Serbia, and Germany backed Austria, and soon the world was at war. These alliances still resonate today, with the Russians and French being seen as pro-Serb, and Austrians and Germans as pro-Croat.

Following WWI Bosnia and Herzegovina was absorbed into the Serb-dominated Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, which was renamed Yugoslavia in 1929.

After Yugoslavia's capitulation to Germany in 1941, Bosnia and Herzegovina was annexed by the newly created fascist Croatian state. The Croatian *Ustaše* (fascists), who ruled for the Nazis, mimicked their masters in persecuting and murdering Croatia's and Bosnia's Jewish population, and persecuting the Serbs.

The Serbs responded with two resistance movements: the *Četniks* led by the royalist Draža Mihajlović and the communist 'Partisans' headed by Josip Broz Tito. The two groups managed to put up quite an effective resistance to the Germans, but long-term cooperation was impossible due to conflicting ideologies.

After WWII Bosnia and Herzegovina was granted republic status within Tito's Yugoslavia. After Tito fell out with the USSR in 1954 and the country cofounded the 'nonaligned movement', constraints on religious practices were eased but the problem of nationality remained. Bosnia's Muslims had to declare themselves as either Serbs or Croats until 1971, when 'Muslim' was declared to be a distinct nationality.

In the republic's first free elections in November 1990, the communists were easily defeated by nationalist Serb and Croat parties and a predominantly Muslim party favouring a multiethnic country. The Croat and Muslim parties joined forces against Serb nationalists, and independence from Yugoslavia was declared on 15 October 1991. The Serb parliamentarians withdrew and set up their own government at Pale, 20km east of Sarajevo. Bosnia and Herzegovina was recognised internationally and admitted to the UN, but talks between the parties broke down.

The War

War commenced in April 1992. Bosnian Serbs began seizing territory aided by their inheritance of most of the Yugoslav National Army's weapons, and Sarajevo came under siege by Serb irregulars on 5 April 1992. Bosnian Serb forces then began a campaign of brutal 'ethnic cleansing', expelling Muslims from northern and eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina to create a 300km corridor joining Serb ethnic areas in the west with Serbia.

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

In June 1992 the UN authorised the use of force to ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid; 7500 UN troops were sent but this UN Protection Force (Unprofor) proved notoriously impotent.

Ethnic partition seemed increasingly probable. The Croats wanted their own share and in early 1993 fighting erupted between the Muslims and Croats; the latter instigated a deadly siege of the Muslim quarter of Mostar, culminating in the destruction of Mostar's historic bridge in 1993.

Even as fighting between Muslims and Croats intensified, NATO finally began to take action against the Bosnian Serbs. A Serbian mortar attack on a Sarajevo market in February 1994 left 68 dead, and US fighters belatedly began enforcing a no-fly zone over Bosnia and Herzegovina by shooting down four Serb aircraft.

Meanwhile the USA pressured the Bosnian government to join the Bosnian Croats in a federation. Soon after, Croatia joined the offensive against the Serbs, overrunning Croatian Serb positions and towns in Croatia in 1995. With Croatia now heavily involved, a pan-Balkan war seemed closer than ever.

Again, Bosnian Serb tanks and artillery attacked Sarajevo. When NATO air strikes to protect Bosnian 'safe areas' were finally authorised, the Serbs captured 300 Unprofor peacekeepers and chained them to potential targets to keep the planes away.

In July 1995 Unprofor's impotence was highlighted when Bosnian Serbs attacked the safe area of Srebrenica, slaughtering an estimated 7500 Muslim men as they fled through the forest. This horrendous massacre was only publicly acknowledged by Bosnian Serbs in 2004.

The end of Bosnian Serb military dominance was near as European leaders loudly called for action. Croatia renewed its own internal offensive, expelling at least 150,000 Serbs from the Krajina region of Croatia.

With Bosnian Serbs battered by two weeks of NATO air strikes in September 1995, US President Bill Clinton's proposal for a peace conference in Dayton, Ohio, USA was accepted.

The Dayton Agreement

The Dayton Agreement stipulated that the country would retain its pre-war external boundaries, but be composed of two parts. The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (the Muslim and Croat portion) would administer 51% of the country, which included Sarajevo, while the Serb Republic, Republika Srpska (RS), would administer the other 49%.

The agreement emphasised the rights of refugees (1.2 million in other countries, and one million displaced within Bosnia and Herzegovina itself) to return to their pre-war homes. A NATO-led peace implementation force became the Stabilisation Force (SFOR), which was replaced by Eufor (an EU force) in 2005.

After Dayton

Threatened sanctions forced Radovan Karadžić to step down from the RS presidency in July 1996 and Biljana Plavšić, his successor, split from his hardline policy and moved the capital to Banja Luka in January 1998.

A relatively liberal Bosnian Serb prime minister Milorad Dodik pushed several Dayton-compliant measures through the RS parliament, including common passports, car licence plates and a new currency called the convertible mark (KM). Dodik lasted until November 2000, when he failed to be re-elected to power.

Recent EU and American policy has been to centralise government, which is a development away from the separate powers concept of the Dayton Agreement. A result is that Bosnia and Herzegovina now has a unified army; meanwhile in the RS the Serb socialist party has taken power and booted out the nationalist politicians.

The Dayton Agreement also emphasised the powers of the Hague-based International Court of Justice and authorised the arrest of indicted war criminals. Minor players have



MEETING & GREETING

Removing your shoes is usual in Muslim households and your host will offer you slippers. When greeting acquaintances in Sarajevo or elsewhere in the Federation, it is customary to plant one kiss on each cheek. In the RS, three kisses (one-one-one) is the norm.

been arrested but the two most-wanted – Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić and his military henchman Ratko Mladić – remain at large. Several hunts for them have ended in embarrassing failure, allegedly because of tip-offs.

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

PEOPLE

According to the 1991 census, Bosnia and Hercegovina's pre-war population was around 4.5 million. Today it's estimated at less than 4 million. No subsequent census has been taken and massive population shifts have changed the size of many cities. The population of Banja Luka grew by over 100,000 through absorbing many Croatian Serb refugees, and initially Sarajevo and Mostar shrank, although the former has been growing again.

Serbs, Croats and Bosnian Muslims are all of the same ethnic stock and physically indistinguishable. The pre-war population was incredibly mixed with intermarriage common, but ethnic cleansing has concentrated Croats in Hercegovina (to the south and west), Muslims in Sarajevo and central Bosnia and Hercegovina, and Serbs in the north and east.

Inhabitants are known as Bosnian Serbs, Bosnian Croats or Bosniaks (Muslims).

RELIGION

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

In between was the home-grown Bosnian Church that prospered in the early Middle

Ages; when the Ottoman Turks invaded, many of these adherents converted to Islam, probably in a trade-off to retain civil privileges.

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

Today, about 40% of the population is Muslim, 31% is Orthodox, 15% Roman Catholic, 4% Protestant and 10% other religions. Most Bosnian Serbs are Orthodox and most Bosnian Croats are Catholic.

Across Bosnia and Hercegovina churches and mosques are being built (or rebuilt) at lightning speed. Many mosques have been funded by Saudi Arabia and there are local concerns that extreme (and alien) forms of Islam are being introduced into what is a generally secular Muslim society.

ARTS

Sarajevo, in the old Yugoslavia, was the cultural capital of the federation. The wars put an end to that with participants fleeing back to their home republics or emigrating, and, consequently, the arts scene is taking time to recover.

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

Bosnia and Hercegovina has excelled in film. Danis Tanović won an Oscar in 2002 for his film *No Man's Land* portraying the relationship between two soldiers, one Serbian, the other Muslim, caught alone in the same trench while Sarajevo was under siege. The early films of Sarajevo-born Emir Kusturica, such as *When Father was Away on Business* and *Do You Remember Dolly Bell?* deal with fraught family life in 1980s Bosnia, and rank among the director's best. The recent prize-winning *Set Free the Bears* and the comedic *Karaula* (Border Post) are well worth watching.

Jasmila Zbanic's *Grbavica* explores the trauma of a young girl discovering that her father was not a war martyr as she thought, but that she was conceived in a rape camp and how confrontation with that fact provides the first step in reconciliation with her mother. The film won the golden bear award at the 2006 Berlin Film Festival.

PYRAMID SELLING

An amateur Bosnian archaeologist, Semir Osmanagic, has amazed the world with claims that an ancient step pyramid lies beneath a Visočica hill 32km northwest of Sarajevo.

The 250m hill in question is evenly shaped, with 45-degree slopes and has corners facing north, east, south and west. Initial excavations have revealed a paved entrance patio, tunnel entrances and large stone slabs. Osmanagic says that his claims have been backed by aerial and satellite images and by an Egyptian expert in pyramid constructions.

If a pyramid is discovered, early European history could be rewritten as currently the only known pyramids are in Egypt and Latin America. Learned opponents claim that there was no civilisation around in prehistory with the skills to accurately shape a hill and then cover it with stone slabs. Regardless of the outcome, the shopkeepers of nearby Visoko are enjoying a small economic boom selling T-shirts, triangular pizzas and pyramid-shaped clocks.

Traditional Bosnian music is called *sevdah* and is often described as the 'Bosnian blues'. Sung in a heart-wrenching style, the lyrics are always about unhappy love. Pop and rock music have always been successful as has folk and, more recently, hip hop. Jazz is also highly popular with an annual festival in Sarajevo (p95).

The craft industry is well developed with artisans fashioning ornamental or practical items from copper and brass, and jewellery in gold and silver. All these items can be found in the lanes of Kujundžilik (p102) in Mostar, and Baščaršija (p93) in Sarajevo.

ENVIRONMENT

Bosnia and Hercegovina is a mountainous country of 51,129 sq km with only 8% of its land below 150m and with 30 mountain peaks between 1700m and 2386m; Mt Maglić, the highest, is on the border with Serbia. Just a toe of land connects it to the sea through Croatia.

The dry and arid south gives way to a central mountainous core before descending to green rolling hills and the northeast flatlands that form the edge of the Hungarian plain.

Limestone forms much of the uplands creating distinctive scenery with light-grey craggy hills, and caves. The rivers shine green and possess a clarity that's seldom seen elsewhere in Europe; with their potential for electricity generation they form part of the country's wealth. Most of them flow north into the Sava – only the Neretva cuts south from Jablanica through the Dinaric Alps to Ploče on the Adriatic Sea.

There are two main national parks. Unesco-protected Sutjeska still has remnants of a primeval forest going back 20,000 years,

while the Hutovo Blato wetlands are a prime sanctuary for migratory birds. About half the country, mostly the north, is forest, with beech at lower altitude giving way to fir trees higher up. Wildlife is found mainly in these forests: rabbits, foxes, weasels, otters, wild sheep, ibex, deer, lynxes, eagles, hawks and vultures. Bears and wolves are at higher altitudes.

Mines and unexploded ordnance put much of the country around the former battle zones out of reach, but visits with local guides are quite feasible. These leftovers from war, the infrastructure damage, air pollution from metallurgical plants and rubbish disposal are significant environmental problems for Bosnia and Hercegovina. Small organisations such as **Green Visions** (www.greenvisions.ba/gv/) battle to bring environmental issues into the public consciousness, but apathy, corruption and political pressures make this task very difficult.

FOOD & DRINK Staples & Specialities

Bosnia's Turkish heritage is savoured in grilled meats such as *čevapčići* (minced lamb or beef), *šnicla* (steak) and *kotleti* (rack of veal).

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

Burek, which is sold in *pekara* (bakery shops), is a substitute for a missed breakfast and comes filled either with *sir* (cheese), *meso* (meat) or *krompiruša* (potato). Snacks for vegetarians include *sirmica* (cheese pie) and *zeljanica* (spinach pie), and for full-blown meals there are stewed bean dishes and stuffed peppers or zucchini dishes.

The ubiquitous pizza and pasta props up the national cuisine and fish is readily available,

especially trout from various fish farms on the nation's rivers.

For syrup-soaked desserts, try baklava or *tufahije* (an apple cake topped with walnuts and whipped cream). Many towns and villages produce their own type of cheese with the feta-like Travnik cheese being particularly well known.

A shot of *šljivovica* (plum brandy) or *loza* (grape brandy) makes a good aperitif or end to a meal.

The best wines come from Hercegovina and include Žilavka (white) and Blatina (red).

Where to Eat & Drink

Cafés and restaurants offering traditional Bosnian food are plentiful, and in Mostar's old town and Sarajevo's Baščaršija you just have to follow your nose to find the nearest place offering *ćevapčići*. Bus stations are always good places for cheap snacks.

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

Coffee is, however, the main social lubricant; people, mostly men, meet to sip their Bosnian coffee, smoke, play cards or just talk the world into some sort of order. The coffee is served in a long-handled small brass pot from which the precious black liquid is carefully decanted into thimble-sized cups. Two lumps of sugar are usually added or the lump is held in the teeth and the coffee sipped through it. A piece of Turkish delight completes the ritual.

Vegetarians & Vegans

The emphasis on meat in the diet means that vegetarians and vegans are hard done by. However, traditional and top-end restaurants will have several vegetarian dishes, although a pure vegan might be challenged when eating trying to eat out.

SARAJEVO

☎ 033 / pop 737,000

How can a people that has suffered so much produce a city of such vitality? This is a question you'll ask yourself time and time again as you explore Sarajevo. In the 1990s this was a city and people on the edge of annihilation, but today it has become a favourite traveller destination.

Sarajevo is a living museum of history. And boy, is there a lot of it! Mosques, churches, cathedrals and fine municipal buildings built by the Ottoman Turks and Austria-Hungarians; a bridge where world history took a fateful turn; and the Tunnel Museum, the yellow Holiday Inn, and the artillery-scarred Library as reminders of recent tragedy.

Sarajevo has charm: rattly old trams circle a city centre containing the Baščaršija bazaar, an ancient trading place with artisans' workshops, coffee drinking dens, restaurants, cosy bars and endless souvenir choices. Further west the Ottoman traces disappear and the city takes on its other guise of a proud Austro-Hungarian colonial capital.

There's a big-village atmosphere here making you immediately feel comfortable and part of what's going on from the outset; it's that elusive sense of belonging somewhere. So expect your travel plans to become *mañana* as a couple of days slip into a week or more.

You don't need to invest much energy in appreciating Sarajevo; it's a city that's easily covered on foot, and it has good public transport. Being a very open city there's a lot to see, and sitting down at a café in Baščaršija gives you a ringside seat on a rich theatre of life.

HISTORY

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

Sarajevo then slipped back into obscurity until the Turks arrived in the mid-15th century and their governors set up house and stayed until 1878. The city then became an important market on the east-west trading routes, and during this time acquired its name, which originates from the Turkish *saraj* (palace).

The 'on the go' Austro-Hungarians, who replaced the fading Ottoman Empire, built railways that connected Sarajevo with the West. Sarajevo even had street lighting before Vienna – there were doubts about the safety of electricity and it was deemed wiser to first test it in the colonies. In 1914, Austro-Hungarian rule was effectively given notice on the Latin Bridge by the fatal pistol shot that killed Archduke Franz Ferdinand.



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

Sarajevo's heritage of six centuries was pounded into rubble and the only access to the outside world was via a 1km tunnel under the airport. Over 10,500 Sarajevans died and 50,000 were wounded by Bosnian Serb sniper fire and shelling. The endless new graveyards near Koševo stadium are a silent record of those terrible years.

ORIENTATION

Sarajevo is wedged into a valley created by the Miljacka River and flanked to the south by the mountains of Jahorina and Bjelašnica, host of the 1984 Winter Olympics.

From the airport, 6.5km southwest, the main road runs up to the suburb of Ilidža,

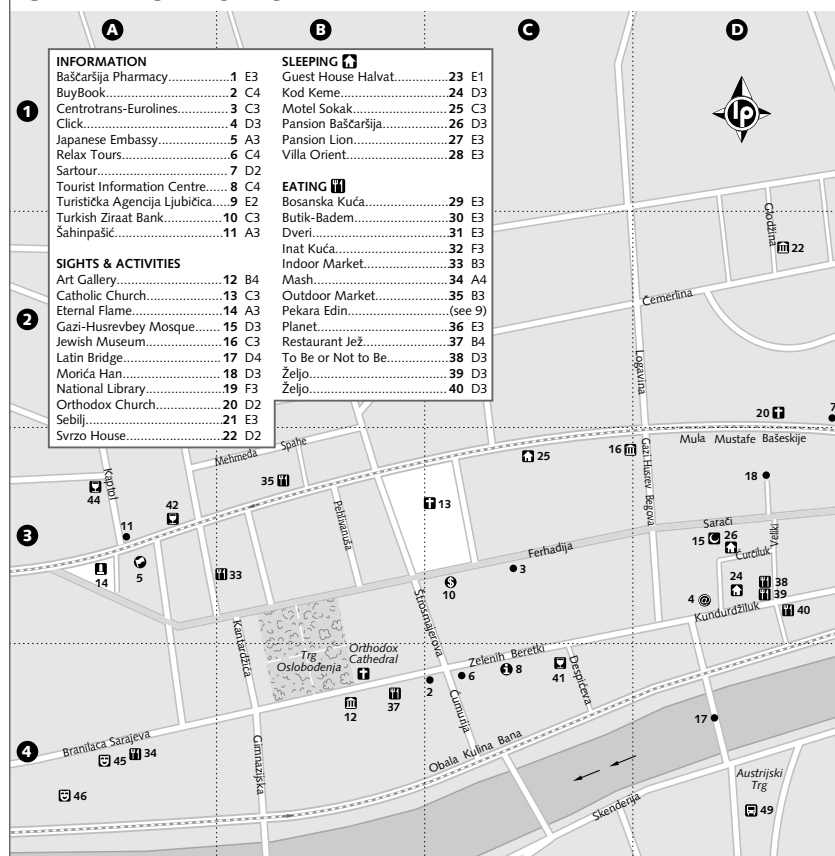
and then swings east through Novo Sarajevo. In doing so it passes the yellow Holiday Inn, home to journalists during the war, and becomes the section of road that gained notoriety as 'sniper alley'. The bus and train stations are to the north. Towards the town centre the road runs alongside the shallow Miljacka River, before leaving it at Baščaršija in the eastern end of town to swing around in a loop back towards the west.

Sedrenik, up on the northeastern side, gives a fine view of the city and mountains behind.

INFORMATION Bookshops

BuyBook (www.buybook.ba) Radićeva (Map p91; ☎ 716 450; Radićeva 4; ☎ 9am-10pm Mon-Sat, 10am-6pm Sun); Zelenih Beretki (Map pp92-3; ☎ 712 000; Zelenih Beretki 8; ☎ 9am-11pm Mon-Sat, 10am-6pm Sun) Art, Balkans and coffee-table books, English-language newspapers and magazines, CDs and in-house cafés.
Sahinpašić (Map pp92-3; ☎ 220 111; Mustafa Bašeskije 1; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Sat, 10am-2pm Sun) English-language newspapers, magazines, cheap English classics, maps and a stack of Lonely Planet guidebooks.

CENTRAL SARAJEVO



Internet Access

Click (Map pp92-3; ☎ 236 914; Kundurdžiluk 1; per hr 3KM; ☎ 9am-11pm) Nonsmoking.

Laundry

Turistička Agencija Ljubičica (Map pp92-3; ☎ 232 109; Mula Mustafe Bašeskije 65; ☎ 8am-10pm Oct-Apr, 7am-11pm May-Sep)

Left Luggage

Main bus station (Map p91; Put Života 8; 1st hr 2KM, then per hr 1KM) Useful while you go into town to look for accommodation.

Medical Services

Ask your embassy for a list of private doctors or in an emergency try the following:

Baščaršija Pharmacy (Map pp92-3; ☎ 272 301; Obala Kulina Bana 40; ☎ 24hr)

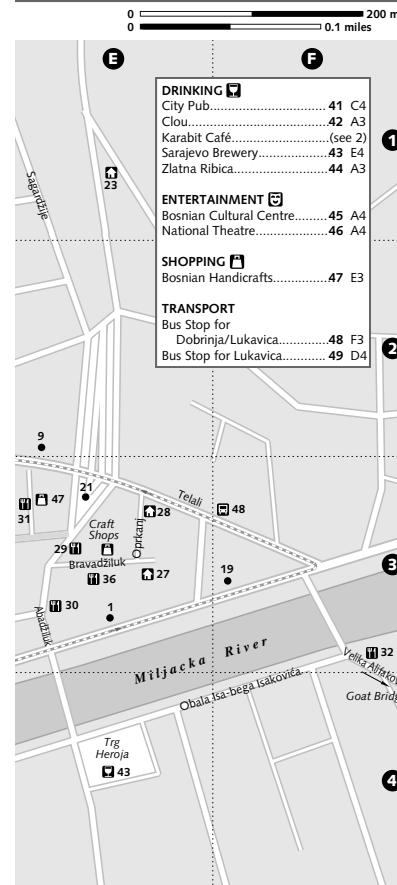
City Hospital (Map p91; ☎ 291 100; Kranjčevića 12)

Koševo Hospital (Map p91; ☎ 445 522; Gradska Bolnička 25)

Money

ATMs are sprinkled all over the city centre, accepting all varieties of debit cards. There's nowhere to change money at the bus or train station, but there is a Visa ATM outside the bus station. Come with some euros in your pocket.

Airport Money Exchange (☎ 10am-5pm) ATM, cashes travellers cheques, money transfers and credit card-cash advances. A financial lifesaver when banks are closed on Sundays.



Post office (☎ 723 422; ☎ 7am-10pm Mon-Sat) Gives MasterCard and Visa cash advances.

Turkish Ziraat Bank (Map pp92-3; ☎ 720 209; Ferhadija 10; ☎ 8.30am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-3pm Sat) ATM; travellers cheques cashed.

Post & Telephone

Central post office (Map p91; ☎ 252 252; Obala Kulina Bana 8; ☎ 7am-8pm Mon-Sat) Queue at counter 17 for post. There's also a telephone centre here.

Tourist Information

Tourist Information Centre (Map pp92-3; ☎ 220 724, 220 721; www.sarajevo-tourism.com; Zelenih Beretki 22a; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-3pm Sat, 9am-3pm Sun) A most helpful place with books, maps, brochures and ready answers for those awkward tourist

questions. It can also provide information on the rest of the country.

Travel Agencies

Centrotrans-Eurolines (Map pp92-3; ☎ 205 481; www.centrotrans.com; Ferhadija 16; ☎ 8.30am-8.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-3pm Sat) As part of the Eurolines trans-Europe bus network, it books international bus tickets; also plane and ferry ticketing.

Relax Tours (Map pp92-3; ☎ /fax 263 330; www.relaxtours.com; Zelenih Beretki 22; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat) Books airline and ferry tickets.

SIGHTS
Baščaršija & Around

A labyrinth of cobbled laneways makes up Baščaršija, the bustling old Turkish Quarter where, behind the tourist panache, Sarajevo keeps its soul. Lose yourself among the small shops, watch craftsmen at work, bargain for jewellery and then rest your legs at a coffee shop over a thimbleful of the strong black stuff.

The central open space of Baščaršija, known as Pigeon Square because of the many birds, revolves around the **sebilj** (Map pp92-3). This fountain, looking like an enclosed Oriental gazebo, is not original and only dates from 1891. From the square a series of parallel lanes, cross alleys and open courtyards strike off in all directions to the National Library (east) and the Gazi-Husrevbey Mosque (west).

The stylish Austro-Hungarian **National Library** (Map pp92-3), decorated with Moorish flourishes, was targeted by the Serbs as a repository of Bosnian books and manuscripts, and therefore an entire people's culture. An incendiary shell on 25 August 1992 wiped out a heritage; restoration work is slow and many books may be irreplaceable.

Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie passed at the National Library

SARAJEVO IN TWO DAYS

Hop on a tram and rattle up to Ilidža and back to see what's what. Wander into and get lost in **Baščaršija**, grab a *čevapčić* at **Željo** (p97) and walk over the river to check out the **Sarajevo Brewery** (p98).

Wake up with breakfast at **Mash** (p97). Take a city tour and get ready for a night out starting at the **Zlatna Ribica** (p98), then aim for the **City Pub** (p98) and finish at the **Club** (p98).

STREET ADDRESSES

Addresses sometimes have the letters 'bb' instead of a street number. This is shorthand for *bez broja* (without a number) and is mostly used by businesses or other non-residential institutions, indicating that it's an official place without a street number.

(then the town hall) on that fateful day in 1914. Despite an earlier unsuccessful assassination attempt that day, they rode west along the riverside in an open car to the **Latin Bridge** (Map pp92-3). It was here that Gavrilo Princip stepped forward to fire his pistol, killing them both and sparking off war between Austria-Hungary and Serbia. Thanks to a series of European alliances, this escalated into WWI.

The elegant stone Latin Bridge has been repaired and it is intended that the plaque bearing the footprints of the assassin be replaced, along with the bust of the archduke. The plaque was ripped from the pavement during the recent war because Princip was a Bosnian Serb. There are also plans to open a museum on the north side of the bridge.

Look for the infamous **Sarajevo roses** on the pavements in central Sarajevo. These are flower shape indentations where a shell has exploded and some have been symbolically filled in with red cement.

Morića Han (Map pp92-3; near Sarać 73) was a tavern when Sarajevo was a caravan stopover on the ancient trading route between East and West. Wicker chairs for coffee drinkers have now replaced plain benches for weary travellers and a carpet shop with waist-high stacks of rugs fills the former stables. The *han* (tavern) has been burnt down several times, with the latest reincarnation dating from the 1970s.

As a measure of their tolerant and multicultural history, Sarajevans are proud to point out that four religions and their places of worship share one city block. Close together are the neo-Gothic 1889 **Catholic church** (Map pp92-3; Ferhadija bb) and the old synagogue (1581, last rebuilt in 1821), which is now the **Jewish Museum** (Map pp92-3; ☎ 215 532; Mula Mustafe Bašeskije; admission 2KM; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Fri, 10am-6pm Sun) with revealing explanations of a Jewish society in Sarajevo that almost ended with the genocides of WWII.

In the same road is the old **Orthodox Church** (Map pp92-3; ☎ 571 065; Mula Mustafe Bašeskije 59;

☎ 8am-5pm), which is medieval (last rebuilt in 1740) and predates the yellow-and-brown Orthodox cathedral in Zelenih Beretki. Inside the church don't miss the **museum** (admission 1KM), which showcases Russian, Greek and local icons, as well as tapestries and old manuscripts.

The nearby **Gazi-Husrevbey Mosque** (Map pp92-3; ☎ 534 375; off Veliki Savađ; ☎ 9am-noon) was built by masons from Dubrovnik in 1531. There are some superb internal decorations employing line, pattern and calligraphy in pastel colours to delineate every separate architectural feature.

Closed at the time of research, **Svrz House** (Map pp92-3; ☎ 535 264; Glodžina 8) shows the lifestyle of a well-to-do, 18th-century Muslim family. It may well have opened by the time you read this.

If you're ever so slightly interested in art, swing by the **Art Gallery** (Map pp92-3; ☎ 266 550; Zelenih Beretki 8; admission 2KM; ☎ noon-2pm Tue-Sat) and be inspired by the designs and boldness of its modern art. Local artists show their work here.

At the western end of the city centre is the **eternal flame** (Map pp92-3), which commemorates the sacrifices of WWII.

Other Sights

The **central post office** (Map p91; Obala Kulina Bana 8; ☎ 7am-8pm Mon-Sat) should be visited for its splendid imperial interior and its big hanging brass clock. Almost opposite across the river is the stunningly graceful **Academy of Fine Arts** (Map p91), which is now an art school.

The three-year siege turned Sarajevo into a killing field. The road in from the airport was dubbed 'sniper alley' because Serbian snipers in surrounding hills could pick off civilians as they ran from shelter to shelter along the road. In the middle of this stood the bright yellow **Holiday Inn** (Map p91) that, as the

THEFT WARNING

There are regular reports about thefts on the overnight Sarajevo to Budapest train. Keep your doors locked and check on who wants to enter your compartment. Being with other travellers or in compartments with families helps reduce your potential as a target and, of course, lock up your valuables.

last functioning hotel, became the home of journalists covering the war. The side facing sniper alley was heavily damaged, but the hotel has since been given a facelift.

The best exhibition in the **National Museum** (Map p91; ☎ 668 026; www.zemaljskimuzej.ba; Zmaja od Bosne 3; admission 5KM; ☎ 10am-2pm Tue-Fri & Sun) is the Ethnology section with its fine display on Bosnian music and instruments, well explained in English. The Natural History section has its share of stuffed birds and beasts but the Prehistory section is empty due to impending building repairs.

The adjacent **History Museum** (Map p91; ☎ 210 418; Zmaja od Bosne 5; admission 1KM; ☎ 9am-4pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat & Sun) is essentially one room of archive material, mostly photographs, covering WWII up to the Srebrenica massacre.

The tunnel that saved Sarajevo! Most of the 800m-stretch under the airport has collapsed, but the **Tunnel Museum** (☎ 628 591; Tuneli 1; admission 5KM; ☎ 9am-4pm Oct-Apr, 9am-7pm May-Sep), on the southwestern side of the airport, gives visitors just a glimpse of its hopes and horrors: the hopes of people surviving with the food it brought in and of the injured it took out, and the horrors from the pounding overhead artillery and sniper fire during the long hours of waiting to go through.

The house in which the tunnel entrance was secreted has a small but image-provoking collection of construction equipment, photos and a video.

A small road leads alongside the Miljacka River, eastwards from the National Library, to an old Turkish bridge, **Goat Bridge**, several kilometres upstream. It's pleasant for a walk or a cycle.

ACTIVITIES

Sarajevo can get stinking hot in the height of summer. What better place to cool off than at the water park, **Termalna Rivijera** (☎ 771 000; Butmirska Cesta bb, Ilidža; day admission adult/child 11/8KM; ☎ 9am-10pm), with its indoor and outdoor pools (open May to September) and water slides? There's also a restaurant here.

TOURS

The Tourist Information Centre has a list of city tour guides.

Green Visions (☎ 717 290; Radnička bb; www.greenvisions.ba; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri) An active ecotourism organisation that promotes and lobbies for the preservation of the country's pristine upland environment. It runs

hiking treks, (snowshoes in winter), mountain biking and rafting events as well as visits to traditional Bosnian villages. It takes zero risks with mines and operates in places that were never areas of conflict.

Sarajevo Discovery (☎ 061 190 591; www.sarajevo-discovery.com) Conducts city tours.

Sartour (Map pp92-3; ☎ 238 680; Mula Mustafe Bašeskije 63; ☎ 9am-7pm) Conducts city tours.

Turistička Agencija Ljubičica (Map pp92-3; ☎ 232 109, 061 131 813; www.hostelljubica.net; Mula Mustafe Bašeskije 65; ☎ 8am-10pm Oct-Apr, 7am-11pm May-Sep) Conducts city tours.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

The Tourist Information Centre has a monthly *Programme of Cultural Events*; check www.sarajevoarts.ba as well.

Bašaršija Noći (Nights of Bašaršija; www.bascarsijskenoci.ba) Basically an excuse to put on and enjoy a whole range of international events in July covering dance, music and street theatre.

Sarajevo Film Festival (☎ 209 411; www.sff.ba; Zelenih Beretki 12/1) Presents new commercial releases and art-house movies at a globally acclaimed festival in August.

International Jazz Festival (www.jazzfest.ba) Week-long event in November showcasing the best in jazz from international and local performers.

SLEEPING

There is an increasing number of private homeowners prepared to rent out rooms or apartments of varying sizes and quality. Always look before you 'buy', making sure the renter gives you a receipt and registers you with the police.

Budget

Turistička Agencija Ljubičica (Map pp92-3; ☎ 232 109, 061 131 813; www.hostelljubica.net; Mula Mustafe Bašeskije 65; dm/r/apt from €8/12.50/16.50; ☎ 5.30am-11pm Nov-Apr, 24hr May-Oct) This helpful and hospitable ('Would you like a coffee?') agency has nearby hostels (one with a women-only room) and can arrange private rooms and apartments. By arrangement, agency staff can collect from the airport or stations. The train station reception (☎/fax 222 783, open 5am-10pm) has luggage storage and bicycle hire.

Kod Keme (Map pp92-3; ☎ 531 140; Čirčluk Mala 15; www.hostel.co.ba; r €20) Location, location, location. Right in the heart of Bašaršija, this small guesthouse run by a friendly Bosnian-Australian is just the haven for the party animal who wants to roam Sarajevo's nightlife.

Pansion Lion (Map pp92-3; ☎ 236 137; http://lion.bih.net; Bravadžiluk 30; s/d/t with shared bathroom €25/50/60) A fresco-adorned lobby, hand-decorated wardrobes, bed linen that matches colour, and mother of pearl and dolphin-patterned lavatory seats – the owners of the Pansion Lion certainly want your stay to be colourful. Centrally situated in Baščaršija, the Lion is within crawling distance of all the sights and bars. Breakfast isn't provided but there are plenty of eating joints nearby. The owners speak English, French and Italian, are very friendly and will do your laundry for you.

Pansion Baščaršija (Map pp92-3; ☎ 232 185; Veliki Čurčiluk 41; s/d 60/100KM) Also recommended, for its cosy atmosphere, is this central *pansion*.

Midrange

Pansion Čobanija (Map p91; ☎ 441 749; fax 203 937; Čobanija 29; s/d 80/120KM) A home-away-from-home guesthouse with character. Light, fresh and airy rooms come in all shapes and sizes, from the attic to the ground floor. Downstairs the lobby flows out on to a small quiet 'beer at dusk' terrace. The centrepiece is the big first-floor wood-beamed sitting room with collapse-into leather armchairs. Suitable for solo women travellers.

Guest House Halvat (Map pp92-3; ☎/fax 237 714; www.halvat.com.ba; Kasima Dobraće 5; s/d 99/138KM; ☎) A suitable choice for a family visiting Sarajevo as children are welcome and those under 13 stay free. There are four doubles and one single, so families should book in advance. Downstairs there's a cosy lounge and breakfast area.

Hotel Hecco (Map p91; ☎ 273 730; info@hotel-hecco.net; Medresa 1; s 80KM, d 110-130KM, t 150KM, apt 150-160KM; ☎) An arty boutique hotel designed by a local architect who has a bit of a thing for Mondrian and cubism. Proximity to Baščaršija, parking and good-value rates make it popular with those with a bit of business in town, or travellers wanting fluffier pillows.

Green Hotel (☎ 639 701; www.green.co.ba; Ustanička bb, Ilidža; s/d/tr €22/34/51; ☎) Tired and jaded from so much travelling, or just overweight from all those traditional Bosnian meals? Come, stay and work out here at this tidy cheapie, which comes with a free, fully equipped gym and sauna. The tram terminus is a 150m jog away and it's a 20-minute ride into Baščaršija. Or you could run all the way.

Motel Sokak (Map pp92-3; ☎ 570 355; Mula Mustafe Bašeskije 24; s/d/tr €37/68/93; ☎) Despite the

name, this is a straightforward no-frills hotel. Its advantage is centrality and good value in a city centre that's short of midrange price accommodation. The Sokak has 11 compact doubles with cable TV; breakfast is continental but being in the thick of Baščaršija there's plenty of cafés to top up at. Free internet is available at reception.

Top End

Villa Orient (Map pp92-3; ☎ 232 754; orient@bih.net.ba; Oprkanj 6; s/d/tr 153/206/256KM; ☎) Architecturally it's a Turkish delight, with a traditional Balkan exterior and a burgundy-and-cream colour scheme inside. The Villa is a boutique hotel with most angles covered: there's a free fitness centre, internet (3KM per hour) and a coffee bar open until midnight.

Also recommended is the **Hotel Exclusive** (☎ 580 000; www.hotel-exclusive.ba; Zabrđe 5b; s 120-160KM, d 180KM, apt 200-300KM; ☎) about 12km out of town but compensated for by value, luxury and a free shuttle service; and **Hotel Hollywood** (☎ 773 100; www.hotel-hollywood.com.ba; Dr Pintola 23; s/d/tr/apt 75/120/160/180KM; ☎) in Ilidža.

EATING

The eating scene is well established in Sarajevo. For a snack or quick lunch there are *čevabdžinicas* (cafés that make and sell *čevapčići*) and *pekara* (bakeries). For bigger bites there's a good selection of cheap restaurants, most offering traditional Bosnian cuisine and some adding a little international selection. The top-notch restaurants attract the expense-account foreign clientele with global menus prepared by chefs who know their sauces. The majority of eateries are in the centre, in Baščaršija, and up from the river on the south side.

Restaurants

Dveri (Map pp92-3; ☎ 537 020; Prote Baković 12; mains 5-12KM; ☎ 11am-4pm & 7-11pm; ☎) A tiny restaurant-in-hiding, which could just pass as someone's kitchen laid out to receive family guests. Try one of their home-made brandies (quince, walnut?) while you watch the cook prepare your meal in surroundings hung with strings of garlic, chillies and corncobs.

To Be or Not to Be (Map pp92-3; ☎ 233 265, 061 545 846; Čizmedžiluk 5; mains 8-16KM; ☎) Somewhat similar in style to the Dveri, To Be or Not to Be offers grills, generous salads and tangy

seafood dishes in its cosy dining room. We ended up with a whale of a fish and more veggies on one plate than we've ever seen in a Balkan restaurant. If you look at the signboard outside you'll notice that the words 'or not' have been crossed out; this alteration was made during the siege when the owners wanted to present a far more positive message.

Restaurant Jež (Map pp92-3; ☎ 650 312; Zelenih Beretki 14; mains 16-20KM; ☎ 5pm-late) A mood of intimacy is felt from the moment you walk into the warmly lit antiques arcade leading into this basement restaurant. Bring the love of your life for that 'heads together, rest of the world doesn't exist' meal. If solo, then fill those noneating moments checking the grandmother clocks on the wall – how many tell the correct time? The cuisine is typical Bosnian tinged with international extras. Our waiter offered a surprise meal, which revealed itself as steak à la chef, served on a wooden platter surrounded by a dam of mash potato to retain the Camembert sauce.

Taj Mahal (☎ 658 724; Paromlinska 48a; ☎ 10am-11pm Mon-Sat, 5-11pm Sun; ☎) For those missing their spices, the dishes here range from the innocuous to a throat-searing application of chillies. There are plenty of vegetarian dishes plus lots of Sarajevo beer to extinguish any fire.

Inat Kuća (Spite House; Map pp92-3; ☎ 447 867; Velika Alifakovac 1; mains 7-18KM) The restaurant was once on the other side of the river, but when the authorities wanted to demolish this traditional Bosnian house to build the town hall the owner insisted it be reconstructed

AUTHOR'S CHOICE

Tavola (Map p91; ☎ 222 207; Maršala Tita 50; dishes 9-12KM; ☎ 11am-11pm Mon-Sat, 2-11pm Sun) A simple, elegant, old-fashioned restaurant where frequent customers are greeted like old friends. Voices here will tend to be non-Bosnian as it's popular with expats, who have the time and networks to discover the best a town has to offer. Parting guests have left messages written on muslin pieces, which have been framed, backlit and hung on the wall. If you're on the lower level, you can see right into the kitchen and watch your meal as a work in progress. Superb pasta, especially the salmon, but memo to the chef: a little less salt please.

here – hence the name. Offerings range from snacks, a sticky baklava, a bowl of chips and beer to a full-blown grill. In warm weather the riverside terrace is the spot for a bit of afternoon relaxation and reading. The service is a bit casual, so keep them on their toes.

Plava Prizm (☎ 471 514; Džemala Bijedića 185; dishes 10-25KM; ☎) Got two hours for lunch? That's how long it takes the world to turn around you on this 15th-floor revolving restaurant, atop the gleaming glass Avaz Business centre. We recommend the mushroom stew that comes with a baked pastry top.

Cafés

Mash (Map pp92-3; ☎ 063 489 033; Branilaca Sarajeva bb; mains 6-12KM; ☎ 7.30-1am Mon-Thu, 7.30-3am Fri, 9-3am Sat, 10am-midnight Sun) Cool, suave place with sofas for a late-night or early-morning collapse, and bar stools for coffee- and snack-grabbers. Sandwiches, snacks and a few veggie dishes (eg fajitas) feature on the menu.

Bosanska Kuća (Map pp92-3; ☎ 237 320; Bravadžiluk 3; mains 6-9KM; ☎ 24hr) 'Come eat,' says the waiter in national costume, inviting you into a restaurant promoting Bosnian tradition in food and setting. This snappy joint makes choosing easier with its colour-picture menu – maybe a kebab, some grilled fish, or stuffed peppers or aubergines for vegetarians.

Quick Eats SNACKS

Pekara Edin (Map pp92-3; Mula Mustafe Bašeskije 69; ☎ 24hr) An always-open bakery selling pizza slices, pastries and *burek*. The *krompiruša* (spicy potato *burek*) provides just the wake-up call for a sleepy palette.

Butik-Badem (Map pp92-3; ☎ 533 135; Abadžiluk 12) Nibbles from this health-food shop include yummy chocolate-coated pistachios, fruit bars and nuts.

Žjelo (Map pp92-3; ☎ 441 200; Kundurdžiluk 19 & 20) Having two branches on the same street says something about the popularity of this *čevabdžimica*.

CAKE SHOPS

Bosnia and Hercegovina produces wonderful (but dreadfully bad for you) cakes.

Planet (Map pp92-3; ☎ 447 447; Bravadžiluk bb) For an afternoon treat take the corner table by the window, devour your 'chosen with difficulty' cake, then sip your coffee and watch the world go by.

Metropolis (Map p91; ☎ 203 315; 21 Maršala Tita) A big restaurant with a large display of eat-me cakes that's popular with everyone who loves those delicious creamy things.

Self-Catering

Outdoor market (Map pp92-3; Mula Mustafe Bašeskije; ☎ 7am-5pm) Near the cathedral, this market overflows with fruit and vegetables.

Indoor market (Map pp92-3; Mula Mustafe Bašeskije 4a; ☎ 7am-5pm Mon-Sat, 7am-2pm Sun) In a remarkable neoclassical building, it sells dairy products and meat.

DRINKING

Pubs, clubs and bars are mostly concentrated in and to the west of Bašaršija, all within staggering distance.

City Pub (Map pp92-3; ☎ 299 916; Despićeva bb; mains 6-9KM; ☎ 8am-late) It's easy to let this place become your daytime address: a kick-back café-bar that turns into a big music and drinking venue at night. This pub swings, and even the bouncers smile.

Club (Map pp92-3; ☎ 550 550; Maršala Tita 7; ☎ 10am-late) This sassy basement joint grooves to DJ music or local bands on weekends. Different rooms cater for drinking, dancing or just chatting up others under the seductive lighting. Out the back a restaurant cooks up sizzling pizzas (12KM to 25KM). It's a bit difficult to find. There's no sign, as the management prefers recommendations by word of mouth. Take the first door on the left after the entrance and then go down the stairs. Note, there's a smart-dress code.

Zlatna Ribica (Map pp92-3; ☎ 215 369; Kaptol 5; ☎ 9am-late) A collision of aesthetics as baroque, *fin-de-siècle* Paris and Vienna, and Art Deco crash together in this warmly lit bar. Nature abhors a vacuum and so does the owner who has filled every nook and cranny with period knick-knacks; it's a visual feast. Drinks come with complimentary nuts and dried figs, and the music is blues and early rock'n'roll.

Karabit Café (Map pp92-3; ☎ 712 000; Zelenih Beretki 8; ☎ 9am-10pm Mon-Sat, 10am-6pm Sun) This is often the place to go when others are closed, you've had enough of them, or you're out of ideas. Buy a book, read a magazine, allow your thoughts to drift and let the coffee or booze edge you back into life.

Sarajevo Brewery (Map pp92-3; ☎ 239 740; Franjevačka 15; ☎ 10am-1am; ☎) Above the river on the south bank stands a large red-and-cream

edifice with fat copper drainpipes, this is Sarajevo's famous brewery. Part of it has been converted into a cavernous bar, all dark stained wood and brass railings, serving the brewery's draft draught plus a very pleasant dark beer that slips down easily. Meals are also available (mains 8KM to 18KM).

Clou (Map pp92-3; ☎ 061 203 984; Mula Mustafe Bašeskije 5; ☎ 10pm-late) A smoky underground den that revs up late at night and then cruises on regardless of the dawn arriving. It's a favourite with locals, expats and travellers in the know, who come for the atmosphere and the free flowing R'n'B and jazz. The club can be difficult to find: enter the fancy doorway, go through the passageway and turn left, then left again down some steps.

ENTERTAINMENT

The Tourist Information Centre is always well up on what's on in town.

Cinemas

Check the daily cinema listings under the 'Kina' column in Sarajevo's daily paper, *Oslobođendje*.

Bosnian Cultural Centre (Map pp92-3; ☎ 668 186; Branilaca Sarajeva 24; movie admission 5KM) Domatic films, plus concerts and cultural events.

Obala Meeting Point (Map p91; ☎ 668 186; Hamdije Kreševljakovića 13; movie admission 4KM) A comfortable cinema in Skenderija showing films in English, with subtitles for the locals.

Gay & Lesbian Venues

There is no visible gay and lesbian scene in Sarajevo but a chat with the friendly staff at Karabit Café (left) may reveal something.

Live Music

SA Club (☎ 211 911; Kranjeviceva bb; admission 3-6KM; ☎ 10pm-6am) Tucked in behind the Holiday Inn, the club is a spacey venue for rock, disco, house, Latino and live music.

Live music is also performed at City Pub (left), Club (left), Clou (above), Bosnian Cultural Centre (above) and the Aqua Disco (below).

Nightclubs

Aqua Disco (☎ 625 500; Mali Kiseljak 8; admission 10KM; ☎ 9pm-3am Fri & Sat) A big-stage disco with DJs and live music. It's part of a swimming-pool complex, where some like to mix swimming and dancing.

Theatre

National Theatre (Map pp92-3; ☎ 663 647; Obala Kulina Bana 9) Stages concerts, ballets and plays.

SHOPPING

This city has enough souvenirs to fill your luggage and exhaust your budget! Bašaršija is the shopping magnet, with small craft shops specialising in enamelled and sculptured copper and brassware, jewellery, clothes and carpets. Be adventurous and bargain. Don't miss the *Survival Map* (17KM), a cartoon-like map of wartime Sarajevo, available in bookshops.

Bosnian Handicrafts (Map pp92-3; ☎ 551 535; www.bhcrafts.org; Culhan 1; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Sat, 10am-4pm Sun) A nonprofit organisation working with refugees who produce colourful woven items.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

For flights servicing Sarajevo see p114.

Bus

Sarajevo is blessed with two bus stations. Buses to Republika Srpska, Serbia and Montenegro go from the Lukavica bus station in the Dobrinja suburb near the airport.

In winter buses for the ski fields leave from near the National Museum at 9am and return at 3.30pm (fare from 7KM).

Bus schedules change so check with the Tourist Information Centre, which has current schedules.

MAIN BUS STATION

Daily services from this station (Map p91; ☎ 213 100; Put Žvota 8) go to Banja Luka (29.50KM, five hours, 9.15am, 2.30pm and 3.30pm), Bihać (39.50KM, 6½ hours, 7.30am, 1.30am and 10pm), Jajce (23KM, 3½ hours, five buses), Međugorje (20KM, 3½ hours, 2.30pm and 4.45pm) and Mostar (13.50KM, 2½ hours, 15 buses).

Centrotrans-Eurolines runs buses to Dubrovnik (44KM, seven hours, 7.15am), Split (36KM, eight hours, 10am, 2.30pm and 9pm), Zagreb (54KM, eight hours, 6.30am, 12.30pm and 10pm) and Herceg Novi (34KM, seven hours, 11am, 7pm and 10.30pm). For services to Western Europe, see www.centrotrans.com.

DOBRIJNA/LUKAVICA BUS STATION

This station (☎ 057-317 377; Nikole Tesle bb) has seven daily buses to Belgrade (28KM, eight hours),

four to Podgorica (25KM, eight hours), three to Novi Sad (28KM, nine hours) and hourly buses to Banja Luka (18.50KM, five hours).

For the Lukavica terminus take either trolleybus 103 from Austrijski Trg or bus 31e, from the bus stop behind the town hall, to the last stop and walk 150m straight ahead.

Train

Services from the train station (☎ 655 330; Žrava Genocida u Srebrenica) run to Mostar (10KM), Banja Luka (22KM), Zagreb (46KM) and Budapest (90KM). See p115 for times.

GETTING AROUND

To/From the Airport

Taxi (20KM) is the quickest way to town, but a cheaper alternative is to take the taxi to Ilidža (5KM) and transfer to tram 3 for Bašaršija.

Car & Motorcycle

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

Rental agencies include **Budget** (☎ 766 670), **Dollar & Thrifty** (☎ 289 272), **Europcar** (☎ 289 273) and **National** (☎ 267 591). **Lami Rent a Car** (☎ 061 260 609) charges from €33 a day.

Public Transport

A rattly but efficient tram network runs east-west between Bašaršija and Ilidža. Tram 4 from Bašaršija goes to the bus and train stations; tram 1 goes between the bus and train stations and Ilidža; and tram 3 runs between Ilidža and Bašaršija. Buy tickets (1.60KM) from kiosks near tram stations or from the driver (1.80KM); a daily ticket (5.30KM) can be bought from a kiosk. Validate your ticket in the machine once on board as inspectors can fine you for not doing so. Bus and trolleybus tickets work the same way.

Taxi

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

AROUND SARAJEVO

Jahorina and Bjelašnica hosted the 1984 Winter Olympics and now offer some of Europe's best-value skiing. In winter, hotels and *pansions* (pensions) generally only accept guests

staying for a whole week starting on Saturday. All accommodation offers a choice of B&B, half-board or full board.

Jahorina

☎ 057

In the Republika Srpska, 25km southeast of Sarajevo, lie the challenging slopes of Mt Jahorina, with 20km of runs for alpine and Nordic skiing. In summer there's mountain biking and hiking. The following hotels are open all year.

The grey-and-black Gothic exterior of **Termag** (☎ 270 422; www.termaghotel.com; r per person from 132KM Dec-Mar, 96KM Apr-Nov; P) doesn't really prepare you for the well-designed interior that employs grey-stained wood, stone-slab walls and cow-hide-covered seating that's, well, rather Argentinean. It scores on facilities such as a big open sit-around fire in the bar, a fitness centre and a swimming pool plus a sauna, ski rental and skiing lessons. Guests can stay for less than seven days in winter, if there's space, and there's a handy weekend special – check in Friday, check out Sunday at 5pm – outside the ski season.

Hotel Košuta (☎ 270 401; fax 270 400; r per person from 53KM Dec-Mar, 38KM Apr-Nov; P) is a big, made-for-the-Olympics hotel just a handy 50m from the ski lift. Guests can stay for less than a week in the snow season. Some rooms have balconies while those at the back have the best views.

Hotel Kristal (☎ 270 430; s/d B&B 86/152KM, half-board 98/172KM; P) is an enlarged mountain hut of a hotel; the rooms here are comfortable, although not spacious. It can be booked out for winter as early as August.

Bjelašnica

☎ 033

A more compact area than Jahorina, Bjelašnica is undergoing some massive development that in future years will provide rental accommodation, shops, restaurants and skiing services. In mind is another Winter Olympics, but at the moment there's just one hotel within minutes of some exciting skiing action.

Hotel Maršal (☎ 279 100; fax 279 149; per person B&B/half-board €26/31 Apr-Nov, €33/38 Dec-Mar; P) is a well-equipped hotel of several storeys, with commanding views over the nearby ski slopes. Guests can stay for less than seven days in winter but there's a surcharge for doing so. Added attractions include a disco

with bands in the winter season, excursions out to old Bosnian villages and transport to Igoman, a small nearby skiing field with a lift and ski jump. Ski-equipment rental and lessons are available.

SOUTHERN BOSNIA & HERCEGOVINA

MOSTAR

☎ 036 / pop 110,000

The slim, elegant Stari Most (Old Bridge), which arches over the swirling Neretva River, provides this ancient town with its icon and name: Mostar meaning 'keeper of the bridge'. The rebuilt bridge was reopened on 22 July 2004 with fine words of reconciliation and hope.

Flanking the bridge is the old cobbled Ottoman Quarter, a haven for the city's artists and craftsmen, along with 16th-century mosques, old Turkish houses and endless cafés. On the western side restaurant terraces hug the steep rocky riverbanks jostling for perfect views of the Old Bridge and its river.

Some magnificent buildings, such as the Gymnasium and City Baths, remain from Austro-Hungarian times, giving an added grandeur. While many grand buildings were destroyed in the war, with only their shells remaining, others are gradually being brought back to life.

History

Mostar grew from a simple crossing point on the Neretva River to an important crossroads settlement and provincial capital in the Ottoman Empire. Ottoman governors liked to set their stamp on their cities through monumental architecture, usually grand mosques but in the case of Mostar, the Stari Most.

The Austria-Hungarians further developed Mostar with a planned city on the western banks where the Gymnasium and City Baths are good examples of their fine architecture.

During the 1980s Mostar became an important tourist attraction centred on the old bridge and the preserved Ottoman quarter. Visitors from all over Yugoslavia flocked here in summer, especially for the July diving competition.

Mostar suffered greatly during the inter-ethnic wars from 1992 to 1995 that resulted

from the collapse of Yugoslavia. Initially a Serbian force shelled the city from the eastern hills killing thousands and forcing even more from their homes. Croats and Muslims combined to expel the Serbs but shortly afterwards became adversaries. The Croat forces took over the western bank expelling Muslims and the city became divided along the river.

The Stari Most was a favoured target for Croat artillery based in the western hills, and on November 9 1993 a direct hit collapsed the bridge into the river.

The Dayton Agreement established a unified city corporation, which concentrated on rebuilding the city centre and culminated in the reopening of the new Stari Most in July 2004.

Orientation

The Neretva River running north to south bisects the town into a Croatian west and Bosnian east section. The Ottoman Quarter spans both sides of the river around the Stari Most. You'll find maps at most kiosks and tourist agencies.

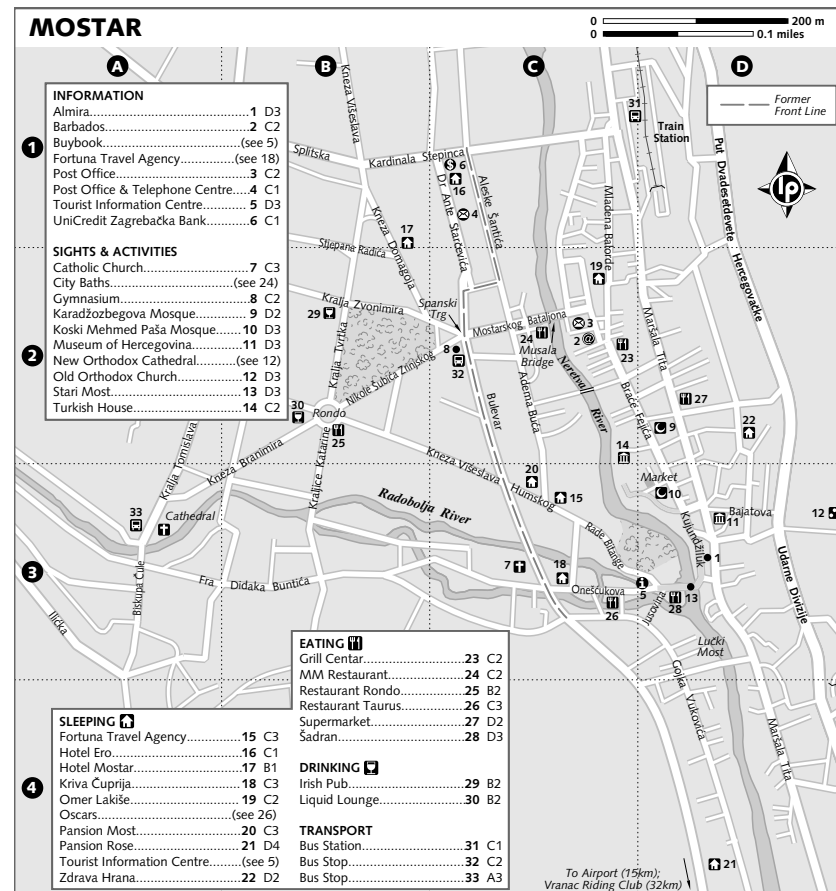
Information

BOOKSHOP

Buybook (☎ 558 810; Onešćukova 24; ☎ 9am-9pm Mon-Sat, 11am-7pm Sun) For an array of books, CDs and guidebooks.

INTERNET ACCESS

Barbados (☎ 558 525; Braće Fejića 26; per hr 2KM; ☎ 9am-11pm)



MONEY

UniCredit-Zagrebačka Bank (☎ 312 112; Kardinala Stepinca 18; ☎ 8am-2.30pm Mon-Fri, 8am-noon Sat) Cashes travellers cheques; ATM.

POST & TELEPHONE

Post office & Telephone Centre (☎ 328 362; Dr Ante Starčevića bb; ☎ Telephone centre 7am-7pm Mon-Sat & 8am-noon Sun) Poste restante; bureau de change.

Post office (☎ 576 513; Braće Fejića bb; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Sat, 9am-noon Sun) ATM outside.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Tourist Information Centre (☎ 580 275; www.hercegovina.ba; Onešćukova bb; ☎ 9am-9pm) A useful one-stop shop with erratic hours outside May to September. Sells maps, guidebooks and postcards, and books accommodation, buses, planes and trains.

TRAVEL AGENCIES

Almira (☎ /fax 551 873; www.almira-travel.ba; Mala Tapa 9; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Sat) Books accommodation, flights and ferries, and arranges car rental; maps available.

Fortuna Travel Agency (☎ 552 197; www.fortuna.ba; Rade Bitange 34; ☎ 8am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat) Sells maps and booklets, books accommodation, and arranges plane and ferry tickets and car hire.

Sights

The obvious place to start sightseeing is **Stari Most**. Originally built in 1556 to replace a nearby wooden bridge, it was named the Petrified Moon because of its slender and refined beauty. After its destruction an almost immediate decision was taken to rebuild it once hostilities had ceased, and the new bridge resembles the old in minute detail. In summer young men earn a living from tourists by plunging off the bridge into the river below (see opposite).

The towers of Tara and Helebija stand as architectural anchors to the bridge. Semicircular **Tara**, on the west bank, used to be the gunpowder and ammunition store while **Helebija**, on the east bank, housed a dungeon on its lower floors and a guardhouse above. **Herceguša**, a third tower, stands behind the Tara. All are closed to the public at present.

The cobbled old town of **Kujundžiluk**, stretching down both sides of Stari Most, acquired its name from the craft of *kujunžije* (copper smithing). Lining the streets are artists' studios, small cafés and souvenir shops, some admittedly selling pretty tacky stuff. Still, items to consider buying include coffee

sets and embossed plates, all created by copper smiths wielding little hammers. The 'tap tap tap' you can hear as you wander these streets is the sound of these craftsmen at work.

Along the eastern side is the 1618 **Koski Mehmed Paša Mosque** (mosque/mosque & minaret €1/2.50; ☎ 9am-6pm) with a commanding view of Stari Most from its minaret. Within the mosque, lit by an immense chandelier plus natural light filtered through coloured glass, is some beautiful linear design work outlining the interior architectural shapes and mihrab.

Nearby is the slightly older 1557 **Karadžozbegova Mosque** (admission mosque/mosque & minaret €1/2.50; ☎ 9am-7.30pm), the most famous mosque in Mostar. At the moment it is more plainly decorated than the Paša mosque because of considerable rebuilding after the war.

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

Upstairs the rooms are divided into men's and women's quarters. Muslim men had more than one wife and a white cloth draped over a closed door was a signal that this wife was ready to receive her husband.

There's an even older **Turkish house** (☎ 550 913; Gaše llića 21; admission 2KM; ☎ 8am-8pm), older than the bridge, with another fascinating interior.

The dramatic **former front line** runs along the street behind Hotel Ero, then one street west to the main boulevard. Gutted buildings still stand here, their empty windows gaping like skeletal eye sockets.

A once-stately building is the now damaged 1896 **Gymnasium** (School; Spanski Trg), a solid piece of Austro-Hungarian architecture softened up by Moorish flourishes. In the background stands the **Catholic Church**, with an out-of-proportion campanile. The original was extended after the war and smacks of a campanile-versus-minaret one-upmanship, but poor workmanship has meant that it's acquired a lean.

HIGH JUMP

The annual diving competition at the end of July is quite an adrenaline rush. Young men from all over the country and abroad (including world diving champions) gather to dive off the bridge into the river 21m below. Most jump, however, as diving is rather dangerous. Before the war these testosterone-charged divers were known as 'the Icaruses of Mostar' and their displays of masculinity had a certain pulling power with the girls of the town.

Now that the bridge has been rebuilt, Mostar's young divers are re-embracing the tradition with a particular frenzy, and have a clubhouse in the Tara tower. While once they dived for cigarettes or a girl's attention, now they're after cold hard cash. A group can expect to pay €50, individuals can bargain for €35 and for a dive it's about €300.

The **Museum of Hercegovina** (☎ 551 602; Bajatova 4; admission 1.5KM; ☎ 9am-2pm Mon-Fri, 10am-noon Sat) is the former house of Džemal Bijedić, who was the ex-head of the Yugoslav government and died in mysterious circumstances in 1978. Now a small museum, that's dedicated more to Mostar than him, it has as its prize exhibit a 10-minute film on how Mostar used, before 1990, the bridge-jumping competition and the actual destruction of the bridge.

At the bottom of the hill is a telling graveyard where all headstones share the same date of death. Further up Bajatova, after the road passes under Uđame Divizije, is a large mound of rubble. This was the **New Orthodox church**, hit by Croatian shelling in 1993. Behind this rubble, and protected in a depression, is the **Old Orthodox church**, which survives but cannot be entered.

Activities

Badžo-Raft (☎ 061 719 577; www.badzorraft.com) is a rafting company based at Konjic, 83km north of Mostar.

Vranac Riding Club (☎ 036-806 575; www.villa-rustica.ba; Villa Rustica (Čaplinja) is a horse-riding school, 34km south of Mostar, which can accommodate people with disabilities.

Enjoy a swim at the beautiful **City Baths** (☎ 551 023; Trg Republike 5; ☎ 10am-5pm), an Austro-Hungarian place dating from 1912.

Sleeping

Both **Fortuna Travel Agency** (☎ 552 197; www.fortuna.ba; Trg Ivana Krndelja 1; r per person 20-50KM; ☎ 8am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat) and the **Tourist Information Centre** (☎ 397 350; www.hercegovina.ba; Onešćukova bb; ☎ 9am-9pm) book private accommodation.

Omer Lakiše (☎ 551 627; Mladena Balorde 21a; bed with shared bathroom 25KM) Look for the brown metal gate. Omer is a kindly retired professor, who has a smattering of English and lets out rooms

in his private house. There are eight beds in two rooms and homeliness compensates for the shared bathroom and bed-cluttered rooms.

Zdrava Hrana (☎ /fax 551 444; Alikaljića 5; r per person from 30KM; ☎ ☎) A short leg-stretch uphill on the east side will take you to this quiet place that is suitable for small groups. There are some apartments with a basic kitchen but no cooking facilities. Breakfast costs 5KM.

Pansion Most (☎ 552 528; www.pansionmost.dzaba.com; Adema Buća 100; s/d from 45/72KM; ☎ ☎ ☎) An eight-room guesthouse, 150m from Stari Most, that's a cheery spic-and-span place. A small café fronts the *pansion* and services here include currency exchange, maps and brochures, and a laundry room.

Pansion Rose (☎ 578 300; www.pansion-rose.ba; Bulevar bb; s/d/tr 42/84/90KM; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) A city-fringe guesthouse run by a friendly family. Rooms are small to cosy but well equipped with comfy beds, fluffy duvets and cable TV. Off-road parking makes this ideal for car-roaming folk.

Kriva Čuprija (Crooked Bridge; ☎ 550 953; www.motel-mostar.de; Kiva Čuprija br 2; s/apt from €25/50; ☎ ☎) For those who like the soothing sounds of rushing water, this guesthouse created out of a former mill, with imported furniture and all mod cons. The epitome of European taste, and sited by one of the tributaries to the main river, the accommodation is as near to the Stari Most and the Ottoman Quarter as you can get.

Hotel Ero (☎ 386 777; www.ero.ba; Dr Ante Starčevića bb; s/d/apt €51/85/110; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) Take a war-damaged hotel and apply money to attract the business guest. The glitzy glass-and-gilt lobby with yellow-spotted green armchairs is the opening statement. Upstairs a peachy-cream décor that's warm and friendly extends into the light and airy bedrooms. The beds

are properly made, too, with white duvets; none of the 'make your bed from a pile of folded sheets and blankets' stuff common in cheaper hotels.

Also recommended are **Oscars** (☎ 061 823 649; Oneščukova 33; per person €10), a cosy *pansion* just off the western side of the Stari Most, and the unexceptional but cheap **Hotel Mostar** (☎ 322 679; www.hotel-mostar.com; Kneza Domagoja bb; s/d €32.50/55, apt from €65; ♿ ☎).

Eating & Drinking

Cafés and restaurants with divine views of the river cluster along the western riverbank near Stari Most. Sit in the shade during the day, or under a starlit sky at night, to enjoy a *čevapčići* or grilled fresh local trout. There's a cluster of café-bars on Kralja Tomislava.

Grill Centar (☎ 061 198 111; Braće Fejića 13; grills 3.50-4.50KM; ♿) Cooking aromas lead you by the nose to this little noshing place full of happy customers. The local recommendation is *čevapčići* with *kajmak* (salted cream turned to cheese) accompanied by a round lump of *lepinon* (bread).

MM Restaurant (☎ 558 900; Mostarskog Bataljona 11; meals 6-12KM; ☎ 8am-10pm Mon-Sat) Buffet presentation makes this a visitor-friendly feeding station. The food's lip-smacking good with some veg options, and there's a ham and eggs breakfast for 3KM.

Restaurant Rondo (☎ 322 100; cnr Kraljice Katerine & Save Kovačevića; mains 8-18KM; ♿ ☎) This place is right by the roundabout, hence its name. Snack on the *zeljanica stagana* (spinach pie) for 3KM, or revel in a *San Pietro all Cartoccio* (a fish fillet baked in foil with a wine sauce, mushrooms, shrimps and mussels) for 16KM.

Sadran (☎ 579 057; Jusovina 11, dishes €4-12) Just before the western entrance to Stari Most this courtyard restaurant has trestle tables set under the spreading tentacles of a kiwi-fruit vine. Service is prompt and there's a good variety of meals to appease a meat, vegetarian or fish appetite.

Restaurant Taurus (☎ 061 212 617; off Oneščukova; mains 8-20KM) In an old mill down below Oneščukova, the Taurus comes with ancient smoke-stained beams and a large log fire for winter; a roofed terrace looks out onto the river. Risotto is a good test of a restaurant's capabilities; too often it comes as a tasteless sludge but not here, where our tasty seafood dinner came in a 'shouldn't have had lunch' portion.

Supermarket (☎ 551 984; Maršala Tita bb; ☎ 7am-10pm) This supermarket has plenty of different food goodies for the self-caterers.

Irish Pub (☎ 315 338; Kralja Zvonimira 15b; ☎ 8am-11pm Sun-Thu, 8am-1am Fri & Sat) A try-hard Irish pub, decorated with a few reproduction Irish knick-knacks, serving Guinness and Kilkenny Bitter. A large outdoor video screen shows sports etc, in silence, so it doesn't compete with the music in the pub.

Liquid Lounge (☎ 063 444 414; SPC, Rondo 66; ☎ 8am-late) Ultracool hang-out bar decorated in mauves, blues and greens to sink you into an ocean of languor. When you can't focus on the fish swimming along the front of the bar (it's an aquarium), you've had too many of their 150 cocktails on offer. Appropriately they play lounge music during the day but swing into house and R'n'B when guest DJs spin the discs at the weekends.

Getting There & Away

AIR

BH Airlines flies from **Mostar airport** (☎ 350 992) to Zagreb and Istanbul.

BUS

The following companies have office in the **bus station** (☎ 552 025; Trg Ivana Krdeljca).

Autoprevoz-bus (☎ 551 900) services include Zagreb (43KM, 9½ hours, 9am) and 14 buses to Sarajevo (13.50KM, 2½ hours, 6am to 7.55pm). Its ticket office sells tickets for other lines except Prevoz Vučić and Globtour.

Centrotans-Eurolines runs to Herceg Novi in Montenegro (€9, 4½ hours, 2.30pm).

Prevoz Vučić (☎ 552 690) has services to Belgrade (34KM, 10 hours, 7.30pm) and Banja Luka (20KM, six hours, 1.30pm).

Globtour (☎ 377 292, 550 065; www.globtour.com) runs to Vienna (€50, 15 hours, 8.30am) and Belgrade (35KM, 11 hours, 9pm), Sarajevo (13KM, three hours, 6.30am, 8.30am and 4pm) and Herceg Novi (43KM, 5½ hours, 7am) via Dubrovnik (25KM, 3½ hours) and Split (20KM, 3½ hours, 7am).

Bus 48 goes from the bus stop on Biskupa Čule to Medugorje (3KM, 45 minutes, seven buses 6.30am to 7.40pm Monday to Friday, and 6.30am, 11.30am and 6.10pm Saturday).

TRAIN

The **train station** (☎ 550 608) is upstairs from the bus station. Two trains run from Mostar to Sarajevo (10KM); the morning train goes

THE PLEASURE OF TRAINS

Travellers going to Sarajevo from Mostar should consider the twice-daily train that starts its day at Ploče on the coast. The best train leaves Mostar's neglected station at 8.04am.

Don't expect a big train – maybe just a loco and three carriages – and perhaps you'll get a compartment to yourself. There may be a buffet service of sorts; in 2004 there was a range of spirits or coffee offered, but this time nothing materialised, so come armed with an espresso from Mostar station.

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

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

onto Zagreb (58KM) and the evening train travels overnight to Budapest (101KM). See p115 for timetable information.

Getting Around

Mostar Bus (☎ 552 250) operates an extensive bus service. From Spanski Trg bus 10 goes to and from Blagaj (3KM, 30 minutes, seven buses from 6.30am to 7.40pm, three buses Saturday), and Bus 51 goes to the airport (3KM, 30 minutes, five buses from 6.45am to 3.30pm Monday to Saturday and 7.30am, 2pm and 3.30pm Sunday).

AROUND MOSTAR

About 15km southeast of Mostar is the village of **Blagaj**. Here, perching under a cliff at the point where the Buna River gushes out of a gaping cave, is a 16th-century **Tekija** (Dervish monastery; ☎ 573 221; admission 2KM; ☎ 8am-9pm) where Dervishes gather every May. Two wooden tombs in an upper room house the bodies of two Tajik dervishes, who arrived with the Turks at the end of the 15th century. Downstairs, among the souvenirs, you might find a fez in your size.

MEDUGORJE

☎ 036 / pop 4,500

Medugorje is a remarkable place – a religious tourist resort attracting Catholics worldwide – and when the Irish are in town there's plenty of *craic* (and Guinness) to be had. Whether you come as a sceptic or as a pilgrim, you'll be amazed by this conjunction of belief and commercialism.

On 24 June 1981 six teenagers in this once dirt-poor village claimed they'd seen a miraculous apparition of the Virgin Mary, and Medugorje's cash registers began to ring out. Now Medugorje is awash with pilgrims, tour buses and tacky souvenir shops.

The Catholic Church hasn't officially acknowledged the apparitions (the first in Europe since Lourdes, France, in 1858 and Fatima, Portugal, in 1917). Three of the original six still claim to see the vision daily, while the Virgin Mary only appears to the others on special days.

The crowds swell around Easter for the Walk of Peace celebrating the anniversary of the first appearance in 1981, the Assumption of the Virgin (15 August) and the Nativity of the Virgin (first Sunday after 8 September). Medugorje can be visited as a day trip from Mostar.

Orientation

A town without street names or numbers! The Mostar road turns southwest at the post office and becomes the main strip ending at St James' Church 500m away. Most of the shops, restaurants, banks and travel agencies are on this strip. There are also some guesthouses, but most are spread alongside lanes reaching out into the fields and vineyards. Southwest, behind the church, is Mt Križevac, while Apparition Hill is to the south. Nearly any shop can provide a map.

Information

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

Globtour (☎ 651 393; www.globtour.com; 🕒 8.30am-4.30pm) Books ferries and flights, and runs its own buses.

Paddy Travel (☎ /fax 651 482; paddy@tel.net.ba; 🕒 9am-3pm Mon-Sat Nov-Mar, 9am-6pm Mon-Sat Apr-Oct) Books accommodation, changes travellers cheques and organises day trips.

Post office (☎ 651 510; 🕒 7am-8pm Mon-Sat, 10am-5pm Sun) Telephone, postal services and cash advances on credit cards.

UniCredit Zagrebačka Bank (☎ 650 862; 🕒 8am-2.30pm Mon-Fri, 8am-noon Sat) Cashes travellers cheques; has an ATM.

Ured Informacije (☎ 651 988; www.medjugorje.hr; 🕒 9am-5pm) Church schedules and Virgin Mary monthly message.

Sights & Activities

Completed in 1969, **St James' Church** is the hub of daily religious activity with services in many languages. Some 200m behind the church is the **Resurrected Saviour**, also known as the Weeping Knee statue, because this gaunt metallic figure of Christ on the Cross oozes liquid at the knee. Pilgrims bring their rosaries, medallions and small bottles and hold them up to capture the supposedly holy fluid. A watery substance does indeed ooze from a fissure but whether this is a miracle or some internal plumbing problem is for the devout or sceptic to decide.

Apparition Hill, where the Virgin was first seen on 24 June 1981, rises above Podbrdo hamlet, southwest of town. A rocky, well-worn path leads uphill, with the rocks shining from the polishing by thousands of passing feet, many barefoot in acts of penitence. The clamber uphill to the statue of the Virgin that marks the place of apparition is punctuated by 10 Stations of the Cross where pilgrims stop to pray.

Mt Krizevac (Cross Mountain) rises up about 2.5km southwest of town. The 45-minute hike to the top via 14 Stations of the Cross leads to a white cross planted in 1934 to commemorate the 1900th anniversary of Christ's death. Millions of passing feet have worn away the soil leaving a cheese-grater surface of sharp-edged rocks, so wear sturdy shoes unless you're doing it the hard way in bare feet. Remedial cold beers are available from the several café-bars at the bottom of the hike.

Sleeping

Unless the Virgin walks down the main street, Međugorje's 17,000 rooms (and increasing)

can cope with most accommodation demands, but if you're visiting at Christmas or Easter then it's best to book.

Most *pansion* rooms are similar although they are most expensive around the church. Proprietors usually offer the choice of B&B, half-board or full board with homemade meals usually complemented with a bottle of *domači vino* (homemade wine).

Paddy Travel (☎ /fax 651482; paddy@tel.net.ba; private/hotel r from €10/20; 🕒 9am-3pm Mon-Sat Nov-Mar, 9am-6pm Mon-Sat Apr-Oct) This friendly, helpful Irish-Croatian outfit can book private and hotel accommodation.

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

Pansion Zemo (☎ /fax 651878; www.medjugorjetravel.com/zemo; Kozine district; camp site per person & tent €3, B&B/half-board €9/14; 📍) Away from the town bustle, this camping ground and *pansion* lies about 1km southeast of the church in village fields. Rooms are available for noncampers.

Pansion Stanko Vasilij (☎ 651 042; per person B&B/half-board/full board €15/20/25; 📍) This ivy-covered tavern and *pansion* with a vineyard nicely mixes the two local earners, religion and wine. Downstairs is a wonderfully atmospheric bar with a stone-flagged floor, wooden beams and a rack of wine barrels – you could be in any period pre-WWI. The *pansion* is 200m southeast from the bottom of the Mt Krizevac trail; it's popular so book early.

Pansion Park (☎ 651 155; fax 651 494; r with B&B/half-board/full board €20/25/28; 📍) Fronted by a big landscaped garden, these two large Swiss chalet-style houses are set back from the main street. Rooms are big and spacious, and downstairs there's a large restaurant to cater for those who have half- or full board.

Eating

Many people opt for half-board or full board at their hotels and *pansions*. Nevertheless there are several good restaurants not only for food but also for a knees-up.

Pizzeria Colombo (pizzas €4-6; 📍) Hail Mary! There's Guinness here, and the dispensing font on the bar is protected with a rosary to ensure a continual flow of the elixir. One of the town's popular eateries, just by the church, it serves up decent pasta, pizza and salads.

Gardens (☎ 650 499; dishes €6-15) A ceiling with winsome cherubs plucking lyres greets custom-

ers in this classy place, where pilgrims come to party after doing penitence. They keep a plate of fresh-eyed fish on ice to tempt you into choosing one of their signature fish dishes.

Dubrovnik (☎ 651 472; mains €4-10; 📍) Good for a hearty cooked breakfast but it mainly scores on desserts: try the walnut pancake. Guinness is on tap and it's not unknown for an impromptu accordion band to strike up a few jigs and have the Irish dancing.

Shopping

The biblical phrase 'money lenders in the temple' comes to mind as you prowl through the shops selling kitsch religious knick-knacks and souvenirs. Crosses, medallions, candles, rosaries, jigsaws of the Virgin Mary, statues, Christs in snow domes, and vestments; take your pick. One hundred euro will buy the vestments to hold your own mass while €2500 buys a 1.5m statue of the Virgin Mary.

These aside, a few stalls sell exquisitely sewn lacework, homemade wine and big chunky woollen sweaters. As there is no specific commandment against copyright piracy, there are a number of shops selling very cheap CDs.

Getting There & Around

Globtour (☎ /fax 651 393, 651 593) runs buses to Zagreb (42KM, nine hours, 7.30am), Dubrovnik (25KM, 4½ hours, 6.10am) and Sarajevo (17.50KM, 3½ hours, 9am). Local buses run to Mostar (3KM, 40 minutes, 3.50pm, 5.30pm and 7.45pm).

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

Duga Gift Shop (☎ 063 403 614; 🕒 10am-10pm) rents out bicycles/scooters €10/50 per day.

CENTRAL & NORTHERN BOSNIA & HERCEGOVINA

TRAVNIK

☎ 030 / pop 33,000

With its impressive hillside medieval castle dominating the town and its birthplace association with famous author Ivo Andrić, Travnik is an ideal day trip from Sarajevo or a stop en route to Jajce.

Tucked into a narrow wooded valley only 90km northwest of Sarajevo, Travnik was the

seat of Turkish viziers who ruled Bosnia and Hercegovina from 1699 to 1851. The town became an international crossroads, with France and Austria opening embassies here, and their diplomatic lives were the inspiration for Andrić's *The Travnik Chronicles*.

Orientation & Information

Travnik's main street, Bosanska, runs east-west. The bus station is off Bosanska on the western end of town, within sight of the **post office** (☎ 547 102; Prnjavor), which can issue MasterCard advances.

Sights

The **medieval castle** (☎ 518 140; admission 2KM; 🕒 10am-6pm Apr-Nov) was built in the 15th century to hold the Turks at bay. It never proved itself, as the Bosnian state was already collapsing and, when tested, the defenders surrendered without a fight. The Turks strengthened the fortifications and it remains largely unchanged today, except that the tower is being turned into a city museum.

If the castle is closed, the key is held by the anthropological and archaeological **museum** (☎ 518 140; admission 2KM; 🕒 9am-3pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat & Sun), off Bosanska, which presents an eclectic variety of fossils, minerals, stuffed fauna and interesting artefacts from the Turkish period.

The museum also has the key, if needed, to the **Ivo Andrić museum** (☎ 518 140; Mustafa Kundić; admission 2KM; 🕒 9am-3pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat & Sun), which is the 'birthplace' of the Bosnian author of *Bridge over the Drina* and *The Travnik Chronicles*. You will find Andrić's texts here in many languages, photos of his 1961 Nobel Prize ceremony, and, in case you never go, a photograph of the actual bridge over the Drina at Višegrad. Don't be fooled though, this museum is not the place where the author was born but a replica built in 1974.

Given Andrić's fame it's most surprising that Travnik has no street or building named after him. Town council please note!

At the eastern end of Bosanska is the famous **Many-Coloured Mosque**, which allegedly contains hairs from the prophet Mohammed's beard. Built in 1851 on the site of the burnt-down original (1757), it has an eastern rather than a western minaret and the exterior has some rather fine decoration – hence the name. Underneath the mosque is a bazaar.

Plava Voda (Blue Water), across the main highway, is a favourite summer spot for idling

by the side of a rushing mountain stream. Stalls sell touristy knick-knacks and a few restaurants serve up local trout.

Viziers' **turbes** (tombs) in the town reflect the importance of Travnik as the capital of Bosnia in the 18th and 19th centuries. There are a couple on Bosanska, near the Hotel Lipa, with explanatory boards in English providing a historical background to the town.

Sleeping & Eating

Pansion Oniks (☎ 512 182; Žitarnica bb; s/d/tr 35/60/80KM) A cheery option with reasonable rooms behind the café of the same name, and near the Many-Coloured Mosque. Breakfast is in the cosy downstairs café, which is a good place for other meals as well.

Hotel Lipa (☎ 511 604; Lažajeva 116; s/d/tr 52/84/121KM; P) A plain but renovated hotel; everybody's friendly although not much English is spoken.

Restoran Konoba (Plava Voda; dishes 6-12KM; P) Local trout provides this restaurant with its signature dish, one of the best trout you'll taste with veggies that don't normally turn up on Bosnian plates (such as carrots and corn). Finish with baklava and a Bosnian coffee as you gaze at the tumbling river to the side of your terrace table.

Getting There & Away

Buses go from the **bus station** (☎ 792 761) to Sarajevo (14KM, two hours, almost hourly), Jajce (13KM, 1½ hours, five daily) and Bihać (30KM, four hours, six daily).

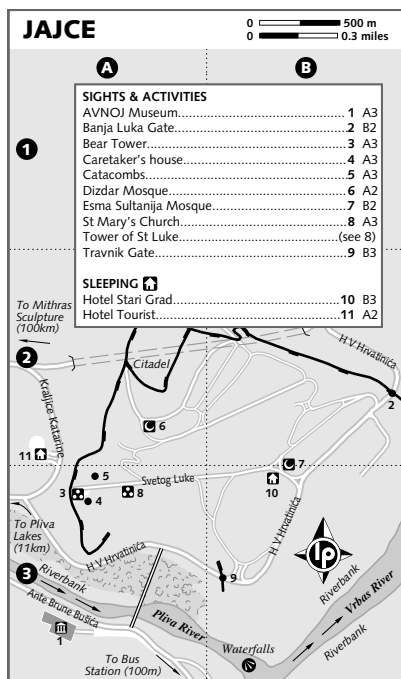
JAJCE

☎ 030 / pop 30,000

Not many towns can boast of their own waterfall, but Jajce can. Not only that, but with medieval catacombs, defensive towers and a hilltop citadel, a prehistoric temple, a massive polystyrene statue of Tito and some exceptionally beautiful lakes there's enough to please the most jaded traveller. As a bonus, there's one of Bosnia and Hercegovina's better hotels to stay in.

Orientation & Information

The old town of Jajce is tiny. It's protected on one side by a ravine formed by the Vrbas River and on the others by sturdy city walls. The only road in passes through the Travnik gate and leaves 200m later by the Banja Luka gate. The waterfalls, the crescent to the Pliva



River, crash 21m down to join the Vrbas below the Travnik gate. They can be reached through a little park just before that gate.

The bus station is on the other side of the Pliva.

Sights

Put on your walking legs – most of Jajce's attractions can be seen in a two-hour ramble, starting from the lane between the Hotel Stari Grad and the **Esma Sultanija Mosque**. As you go, look out for the information plates in English.

First stop is the roofless ruin of the medieval **St Mary's Church** with an adjacent campanile, **Tower of St Luke**. The bones of St Luke were reputedly kept in the church until the town fell to the Turks in 1459, when they were transferred to Venice, and then Padua. The church became a mosque and the tower a handy minaret until fire destroyed the church in 1832.

Beyond the church looms the **Bear Tower**, so called because of its size and strength. The lower walls are some 6m thick and, until WWII, when a ground entrance was added,

the only entry was through the top-storey gateway. A quickly removable ladder made access impossible to an enemy.

By the tower is a small **caretaker's house** (☎ 659 231; ☎ 9am-dusk), the home of Alida and her husband, who hold the keys for access to the tower, the adjacent catacombs, the citadel and the Roman relief sculpture of Mithras. For 1KM per person per site, they will open doors for you and provide an English or German commentary.

The **catacombs** were built around 1400 by the powerful Duke Hrvoje as an underground church-mausoleum for his family. There are unoccupied crypts, an altar for funeral ceremonies, and, decorating the interior, sculpted double crosses, suns and crescent moons symbolising death, life after death and eternal sleep.

Opposite St Mary's church, steps lead to the **citadel** via the small **Dizdar Mosque** (Women's Mosque), which has a dome concealed beneath its angled roof. The **citadel walls** crown the egg-shaped hill upon which they sit, giving Jajce its name, 'little egg'. The interior contains little except a powder magazine, which the Turks converted into a school, but a walk on the walls gives a good view of the town. As you leave the entrance and walk anticlockwise around the walls, look at the sculpted relief by the entrance – it is the coat of arms of the Bosnian king, Stjepan. Walk around the citadel, down ulitsa Kralje Katerine and then turn right to find ulitsa Mitrasova. At the end is a stone building containing a Roman-era **sculpture** depicting the god Mithras and a bull-slaughter ritual.

In 1943 Jajce hosted the second congress of AVNOJ (Antifascist Council of the People's Liberation of Yugoslavia), which formulated the postwar socialist constitution of Yugoslavia. The actual building in the park opposite the Pliva falls is now a small **AVNOJ museum** (admission 2KM; ☎ 10am-2pm & 4-7pm). In the corner is a large brooding statue of partisan Tito, carved from polystyrene and painted gold. On the floor of the hall are the seats and benches where the delegates sat, and flanking them are contemporary photographs of the congress. Tito's comfy armchair is there in the front row under a beady-eyed photograph of Marx, but his comrades had to make do with hardback benches. Many of the artefacts were looted in the last war but it's still worth a visit.

The upper reaches of the Pliva River are dammed into a series of **lakes** that make for a superb relaxation spot: boating, fishing and swimming are all possible. Between the lakes is a line of small wooden **mills** that were built in Ottoman times to grind wheat.

Sleeping & Eating

There are two hotels in town, which also serve up food.

Hotel Stari Grad (☎ 654 006; Svetog Luke 3; s/d/apt 55/80/160KM; P) The immediate eye-catcher is the glass-covered 3m gaping pit in the floor of the reception and restaurant-bar. As you step around it, gingerly for the first time, you'll see an old wall of an ancient Turkish hammam that was unearthed during reconstruction. It's a most pleasant hotel that looks old although it isn't, with well-furnished comfortable rooms, saunas and helpful staff who speak good English. The good restaurant serves up tasty traditional Bosnian food plus some Italian dishes.

Hotel Tourist (☎ 658 151; Kraljice Katerine bb; s/d/tr 47/74/96KM; P) A straightforward business-conference hotel that's perfectly acceptable when the more atmospheric Stari Grad is full.

Getting There & Away

Buses go from the **bus station** (☎ 659-202) to Sarajevo (22KM, 3½ hours, six daily), Banja Luka (10KM, 1½ hours, seven daily) and Banja Luka (10KM, two hours, six daily).

BANJA LUKA

☎ 051 / pop 232,000

There's little to attract visitors to the Republika Srpska capital. The only reasons for stopping are to take a breather en route to Belgrade, Zagreb or Sarajevo, or for the rafting.

Banja Luka was never much of a tourist centre. A 1969 earthquake destroyed about 80% of the town and in 1993 local Serbs updated the damage by blowing up the city's mosques, including the famous 1580 Ferhadija. In 2001 a bussed-in nationalist mob stoned an attempt to lay a new foundation stone

Orientation & Information

The bus station and adjacent train station are about 3km northeast of the centre. There's now a city **tourist office** (☎ 349 910; www.banjaluka-tourism.com; Bana Lazarevića 6; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat).

Sights & Activities

The walls of a large 16th-century **castle** of Roman origin now enclose parkland, and the castle is host to a summer-long festival of music, dance and theatre.

The Vrbas River is a big centre for rafting; contact **Kanjon Rafting Club** (☎ 065 420 000; www.kanjonraft.com) or the tourist office for details.

Sleeping & Eating

Veselina Maslaše, parallel to Kralja Petra but one block east, is a long strip of cafés, bars, pastry shops and ice-cream vendors. Take your choice.

Hotel Bosna (☎ 215 775; www.hotelbosna.com; Kralja Petra 9; old s/d 67/104KM, renovated s/d 102/144KM; (P)) A grand hotel right in the heart of matters with some perfectly adequate and cheap unrenovated rooms – some are big enough for a party. A big restaurant, bar and shops augment this city hotel.

Kod Muje (☎ 358 492; snacks 3-6KM; ☎ 7am-11pm; (S)) Take the lane beside No 34 Veselina Maslaše and discover the best in old-fashioned cheap eateries. It's a wooden cabin with a big front garden that quickly fills in fine weather. Whether it's a *čevapčići* or a grill you're after, you will be treated like a guest of the family.

Master (☎ 317 444; Sime Šolaje 7; mains 6-15KM; ☎ 10am-midnight; (S)) Jaded by all that grilled meat? Then try Mexican; the locals have certainly warmed to enchiladas, fajitas and a Corona beer or two.

Getting There & Away

The **bus station** (☎ 315 355; Prote N. Kostića bb) has hourly buses to Belgrade (29KM, seven hours), six to Sarajevo (23KM, five hours), and services to Zagreb (24KM, seven hours, 8.45am, 9.10am, 4.10pm and 5.30pm) and Bihać (16KM, three hours, 5.30am, 7.30am, 1pm and 2pm).

The **train station** (☎ 301 229; Prote N. Kostića bb) has international connections with Belgrade, coastal Croatia and Zagreb; see p115 for more information.

A taxi from the centre to the train station should cost 6KM.

BIHAĆ

☎ 037 / pop 80,000

Tucked up in northwest Bosnia and Hercegovina, Bihać is earning a reputation as one of the country's more outdoors-oriented towns.

WARNING

The Bihać area was mined extensively during the war and while much de-mining has been carried out there are still dangers in the countryside. While tour operators in the area will know what's safe, if you're intending doing some off-road adventuring then check with the local tourist office or, better still, Sarajevo's Mine Action Centre (p85).

The attraction is the tumbling rapids of the sapphire-coloured Una River, which make it a kayaking and rafting playground. The Una Regatta in the last week of July is three glorious days of messing about in boats.

Orientation

The Una River splits the town into two. The western side contains the town centre while the eastern side has some riverside hotels (where you're paying for the riverside location) and restaurants. From here Bihaćkih Branilaca leads out of town northwards to the Croatian border and Put V Korpusa leads south past the bus station on to Sarajevo.

Information

Centar (Put V Korpusa 5; per hr 2KM; ☎ 7am-10pm) Internet access.

Post office (☎ 332 332; Bosanska 2; ☎ 7am-8pm) Exchange office and MasterCard cash advances.

Raiffeisen Bank (☎ 329 000; Dana Državnosti 5; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8am-2pm Sat) Cashes travellers cheques; ATM.

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

Tourist office (☎ 222 777; Dr Iršana Ljubijankića 13; ☎ 8am-4pm Mon-Fri) A clued-up organisation with its finger on the pulse of river activities and accommodation possibilities. It also has a kiosk (open in summer) at the junction of Bosanska and Put V Korpusa.

Sights

The lofty, stone **captain's tower** on the western side of the river dates from the early 16th century. It was a prison from 1878 to 1959, but now holds a nifty multilevel **museum** (☎ 223 214; admission 1KM; ☎ 10am-2pm & 4-8pm Mon-Fri), featuring sarcophagi from the Bihać area and displays on the history of the town.

Behind the tower are the remains of the **Church of St Anthony**, destroyed in WWII. The original St Anthony is now the **Fethya Mosque**

at the other end of the town, and was converted by the Turks in the 1530s. At the end of the 17th century the Croats ousted the Turks and built a new St Anthony's, but it was never completed and WWII damage left just a bell tower.

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

Activities

The rafting season usually runs from March to October, and there are two outfits providing the thrills and spills. Both need a minimum of six but it's always possible to join up with another group. Prices depend on the length and complexity of the trip and they can cater for both the nervous and hard cases. Both owners will collect by arrangement from the bus station.

Una Kiro Rafting (☎ /fax 223 760, 061 192 338; www.una-kiro-rafting.com; Golubic bb) is based at Golubic, 6km from Bihać. These rafters offer kayak lessons (€50 per day) and rafting (€20 to €40 per person). B&B is available at €26 per person, camping from €5 per person and there's a free kayak available for just messing around in.

Una Rafting (Sport Bjeli; ☎ 388 555, 061 138 853; raftbell@bih.net.ba; Klokot Pecikovići bb) is based about 12km away from Bihać. It offers rafting (from €22), kayaking (two/five days €47/100), mountain biking and climbing. B&B accommodation costs €15.

For more specialised activities **Club Extreme Sport Limit** (☎ 061 144 248; lipa3@bih.net.ba; Dzanica Mahala bb) offers guided mountain climbing.

WORTH A TRIP

Bosnia and Hercegovina's second-most famous bridge spans the Drina at **Višegrad**. The **Mehmed-Pasha Sokolovic** bridge is the star of Ivo Andrić's *Bridge over the Drina*. A multi-arched graceful structure, it's still the same bridge, albeit with repairs, as built in the 16th century.

Up in the hills, 5km from Višegrad, **Vilina Vlas** (☎ 058-620 311; vvlas@teol.net; Višegrad; s/d full board with treatment 48/80KM) is a thermal-waters resort specialising in post-surgery recovery, gynaecological problems, stroke recovery and back troubles. Visitors can come for a three-day relax and tune up, but serious treatment requires 10 to 28 days.

hiking and biking from April to October, plus canyoning and caving.

For information on fishing, ask at the tourist office.

Sleeping

If the following are full ask at the tourist kiosks for alternatives, but note that the hotels in town, down on the river, are expensive.

Hut Aduna (☎ 314 304; Put V Korpusa bb; per person 6KM; (P)) An under-the-trees camping ground about 5km out of town, between the Una River and the Ada Hotel. Sites are powered, there's a toilet and shower block, and a shared kitchen.

Villa Una (☎ /fax 311 393, 061 919 303; Bihaćkih Branilaca 20; s/d 50/60KM; (P)) Centrally placed near the river and good value for a sparkling-clean private home with well-equipped rooms.

Hotel Park (☎ 226 394; www.aduna.ba; Put V Korpusa bb; s/d/apt €28/48/65; (P) (S)) The town's big hotel has reasonable prices for recently renovated rooms. Singles are a bit shoebox, the doubles have more space and the apartments (three people) are even better. A coffee shop, restaurant and pretty good pizzeria complete the picture.

Eating

Express (☎ 332 380; Bosanska 5; mains 3-6.50KM; ☎ 7am-10pm) It's express by name and express by nature at this choose-point-and-buy cafeteria near the post office. There's a large video screen here for sports broadcasts.

Biffe Mlin (☎ 061 144 200; Put V Korpusa bb; dishes 5-12KM; (S)) Sitting-out weather? OK, arrive before sunset and bag the table on the small island in the river; it's all right, there's a causeway. Quaff a beer or three while the sun goes down and watch the light planes buzz round the sports aerodrome over the river. After five or six beers you might try the plate of pig knuckles garnished with a bunch of spring onions, otherwise there are more usual items on the menu.

Sunce (☎ 310 487; Put V Korpusa bb; mains 8-15KM) If you don't want to travel so far, then this restaurant is just off the southeastern side of the bridge. Go for a table on the terrace or by the large picture windows giving a marvellous view of the Una rushing by. Go for the house speciality, *Plata Una* (30KM for two), an anti-pasto dish with nearly everything on it.

River Una (☎ 310 014; Džemala Bijedića 12; mains 8-15KM; ☎ 7am-11pm) Sedate downstairs dining, drinks on the river terrace with the water

lapping at your feet, or snug tables among the wooden beams upstairs – take your pick. The succulent trout is first choice with a fall-back of traditional Bosnian grills.

Samoposluga (☎ 312 601; Bihackih Branilaca bb; ☎ 7.30am–10pm Mon–Sat, 8am–3pm Sun) A sizable supermarket next to Villa Una for feed-yourself requirements.

Getting There & Away

Useful services from the **bus station** (☎ 311 939; Put V Korpusa bb) go to Banja Luka (16KM, three hours, 5.30am, 7.30am, 1pm and 3pm), Sarajevo (39.50KM, seven hours, 12.45am, 7.30am, 2.30pm and 10pm) and Zagreb (21KM, 2½ hours, 4.45am, 10.20am, 2pm and 4.45pm).

For adventurous rail travellers there's a train to Zagreb (21KM, 10¼ hours, 9am), which involves a five-hour wait and change of trains in Novi Grad.

BOSNIA & HERCEGOVINA DIRECTORY

ACCOMMODATION

Private accommodation is easy to arrange in Sarajevo and is possible in Mostar; most likely you'll be approached at the bus or train station. Staying in a home is not only cheaper but also usually very pleasant. Likely as not, your hosts will ply you with coffee, pull out old pictures of Tito (depending on their age and politics) and regale you with many tales of old Yugoslavia's glorious past.

Sarajevo is well blessed with budget accommodation and most towns have *pansions* (pensions) that are generally slightly humbler, though more personable, than the hotels. Some hotels have not changed since the days of state ownership while others have been privatised and modernised.

Unless otherwise mentioned, breakfast is included but not usually with private accommodation, and all rooms have bathrooms. The prices quoted are for the high season.

ACTIVITIES

Bosnia and Herzegovina has a huge potential for outdoor activities that will be fully realised once de-mining is completed. Water activities are obviously safe, as are activities in national

parks and those led by local guides. Skiing is available at Jahorina (p100) and Bjelašnica (p100); rafting and kayaking at Bihać (p111), Banja Luka (p110) and near Mostar (p103); and mountain climbing and canyoning from Bihać (p111).

Popular with expat workers, **Green Visions** (☎ 717 290; www.greenvisions.ba; Radnička bb; ☎ 9am–5pm Mon–Fri) is a Sarajevo ecotourism agency that runs outdoors trips; they also return a portion of their proceeds to local communities (see p95).

BOOKS

Rebecca West's mammoth *Black Lamb & Grey Falcon* (published in 1941) remains a classic piece of travel writing, although its 1937 ending is of no help in understanding more recent history. Noel Malcolm's *Bosnia: A Short History* is a good country-specific complement that brings history up to date.

Misha Glenny's *The Balkans, Nationalism, War, and the Great Powers, 1804–1999* has some telling pages on the background to the recent war. *Balkan Babel* by Sabrina Ramet is an engaging look at Yugoslavia from Tito to Milošević.

Forgotten Beauty, a Hiker's Guide to Bosnia and Herzegovina's 2000m Peaks by Matias Gomez is a very useful publication for hikers.

BUSINESS HOURS

Business hours are 8am to 4pm Monday to Friday; banks open Saturday morning. Shops are open longer hours and many open on Sunday.

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Bosnia and Herzegovina's greatest danger is mines and unexploded ordnance; see p85. Nationalism runs strong in some parts of the country (notably the RS and Croatian areas to the south and west), but this should not affect travellers, who can expect a warm welcome almost everywhere.

DISABLED TRAVELLERS

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

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES Bosnian Embassies & Consulates

Bosnia and Herzegovina has embassies and/or consulates in the following countries; check www.mvp.gov.ba for further listings.

Australia (☎ 02-6232 4646; www.bosnia.webone.com.au; 6 Beale Crescent, Deakin, ACT 2600)

Canada (☎ 613-236 0028; fax 613-236 8557; 130 Albert St, Suite 805, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5G4)

Croatia (☎ 01-46 83761; 01-46 83764; Torbarova 9, PP27, 10001 Zagreb)

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

Germany (☎ 030-814 712 33/4/5; www.botschaftbh.de; Ibsenstrasse 14, D-10439)

Netherlands (☎ 70-358 85 05; fax 70-358 43 67; Bezuidenhoutseweg 223, 2594 AL Den Haag)

Slovenia (☎ 01-23 43 250; fax 01-23 43 261; Kolarjeva 26, 1000 Ljubljana)

UK (☎ 020-7373 0867; fax 020-7373 0871; 5-7 Lexham Gardens, London W1R 3BF)

USA (☎ 202-337-1500; www.bhembassy.org; 2109 E St NW, Washington, DC 20037)

Embassies & Consulates in Bosnia & Herzegovina

The nearest embassies for Australia, Ireland and New Zealand are found in Vienna, Ljubljana and Rome respectively. These countries have representation in Sarajevo:

Austria (Map p91; ☎ 033-279 400; fax 033-668 339; Džidžikovac 7)

Bulgaria (☎ 033-668 191; fax 033-668 182; Soukunar 5)

Canada (Map p91; ☎ 033-222 033; fax 033-222 004; Grbavička 4/2)

Croatia (Map p91; ☎ 033-444 331; fax 033-472 434; Mehmeda Spahe 16)

France (Map p91; ☎ 033-282 050; fax 033-212 186; Mehmed-bega K Lj 18)

Germany (Map p91; ☎ 033-275 000; fax 033-652 978; Mejtaš Buka 11-13)

Japan (Map pp92-3; ☎ 033-209 580; fax 033-209 583; MM Bašeskije 2)

Netherlands (Map p91; ☎ 033-562 600; fax 033-223 413; Grbavička 4/1)

EMERGENCY SERVICES

- Ambulance ☎ 124
- Fire ☎ 123
- Police ☎ 122
- Roadside emergency ☎ 1282, 1288

Serbia (Map p91; ☎ 033-260 080; fax 033-221 469; Obala Mlaka Dizdara 3a)

Slovenia (Map p91; ☎ 033-271 251; fax 033-271 270; Bentbaša 7)

UK (Map p91; ☎ 033-282 200; fax 033-282 203; Tina Ujevića 8)

USA (Map p91; ☎ 033-445 700; fax 033-659 722; Alipašina 43)

GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS

Attitudes to homosexuality are very conservative with no open displays of affection between same-sex couples and there are no openly gay places to meet. Same-sex couples are not likely to encounter difficulties booking a room.

The staff at the BuyBook (p91) store in Sarajevo may be able to put you in contact with the Q Association, a gay and lesbian organisation.

HOLIDAYS

Bajram, a twice-yearly Muslim holiday (February and November or December), is observed in parts of the Federation. Easter and Christmas are observed but Orthodox and Catholic dates may not coincide.

New Year's Day 1 January

Independence Day 1 March

May Day 1 May

National Statehood Day 25 November

INTERNET RESOURCES

Bosnia & Herzegovina (www.bhtourism.ba) Useful tourist information.

Bosnian Institute (www.bosnia.org.uk) Deals with Bosnian culture.

Grad Sarajevo (www.sarajevo.ba)

Hidden Bosnia (www.hiddenbosnia.com) Useful tourist information.

InsideBosnia (www.insidebosnia.com) Has news on events and other interesting links.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina (www.mvp.gov.ba) Has details on embassies and visas.

Office of the High Representative (www.ohr.int)

A good source of news.

LANGUAGE

The people of Bosnia and Herzegovina basically speak the same language, but it's referred to as 'Bosniak' in the Muslim parts of the Federation, 'Croatian' in Croat-controlled parts and 'Serbian' in the RS.

The Federation uses the Latin alphabet; the RS uses Cyrillic. See the Croatian and Serbian section of the Language chapter (p895).

MAPS

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

MONEY

ATMs

ATMs taking credit and debit cards are common in towns and cities.

Credit Cards

Visa, MasterCard and Diners Club are readily accepted by larger establishments all over the country.

Currency

The convertible mark (KM; *ki-em*) is Bosnia and Hercegovina's official currency. It's tied to the euro – 1KM equals €0.51129, but in effect 2KM equals 1€. Many establishments (especially hotels) accept euros (notes only) and sometimes list prices in euros.

Aim to finish your visit with no convertible marks as the currency is difficult to exchange outside the country.

Travellers Cheques

Travellers cheques can be readily changed at Raiffeisen and Zagrebačka banks but they impose a low monthly exchange limit. We were asked at one bank to show a receipt for our original purchase.

POST

Post and telephone offices are usually combined. Poste restante service is available at all cities included in this book; letters should be addressed to the person at 'Poste Restante, [postcode], Bosnia and Hercegovina'. Useful postcodes:

Bihac 77000

Međugorje 88266

Mostar (Zapadni) 88000

Sarajevo 71000

TELEPHONE

Phonecards, for local or short international calls at public phones, can be bought at post offices or street kiosks for 2KM or 5KM. Unfortunately, cards issued in the Serbian, Croatian or Bosnian parts of the country are not interchangeable. It's cheaper to use the telephone section of post offices for longer calls.

Public telephones have a button labelled 'language' to give you instructions in English.

Dial ☎ 1201 for the international operator and ☎ 1182 for local directory information.

Mobile Phones

Mobile (cell) phone starter kits can be bought at kiosks for 29.50KM, including a SIM card and 10KM of credit. The numbers with the best coverage start with ☎ 061 or ☎ 062.

VISAS

Citizens of the EU, Australia, Canada, Croatia, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, Norway, Russia, Serbia, Montenegro, Switzerland and the USA do not require a visa.

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

The cost of a single entry visa is €31. For a full list and application requirements check the government website www.mvp.gov.ba.

TRANSPORT IN BOSNIA & HERCEGOVINA

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Air

Bosnia and Hercegovina's main airport is located at Sarajevo, with others at Mostar and Banja Luka.

European airlines such as Austrian Airlines, Czech Airlines and Lufthansa operate out of intercontinental hubs such as London, Frankfurt, Prague and Vienna. No discount airlines fly into Bosnia and Hercegovina yet, but a cheap flight to Zagreb or Dubrovnik and a bus trip could be an option.

The following airlines (Sarajevo numbers) serve **Sarajevo airport** (☎ 289 120; www.sarajevo-airport.ba; Kurta Schorka bb):

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

Alitalia (code AZ; ☎ 556 565; www.alitalia.com)

Austrian Airlines (code OS; ☎ 474 444; www.aa.com)

BH Airlines (code JA; ☎ 550 125; www.airbosna.ba)

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

ČSA (Czech Airlines; code OK; ☎ 289 250; www.csa.cz)

JAT (code JU; ☎ 259 750; www.jat.com)

Lufthansa (code LH; ☎ 474 444; www.lufthansa.com)

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

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

BH Airlines serves **Mostar airport** (☎ 350 992) with international flights.

Land

BUS

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

Međugorje, Mostar, Sarajevo and Bihać have bus connections with Split and Dubrovnik on the coast, and Zagreb in Croatia. Sarajevo and Banja Luka have services to Belgrade and Podgorica in Serbia and Montenegro.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

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

TRAIN

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

Ploče Mostar Sarajevo Banja Luka Zagreb Budapest

Ploče	Mostar	Sarajevo	Banja Luka	Zagreb	Budapest
6.40am	8.04am	10.18am	3.34pm	-	-
			7.47pm		
10.22am	8.50am	6.25am	6.25am	5.45pm	
			(next day)		
4.20pm	5.56pm	8.32pm		8.48am	
				(next day)	
11.06pm	8.40pm	6.18pm	1.11pm		
		8.57am			

A 1st-/2nd-class seat from Sarajevo to Budapest costs 90/131KM, and a 2nd-class seat from Banja Luka to Zagreb costs 22KM. An overnight service goes from Banja Luka to Belgrade (24KM, 6½ hours, 9.55pm).

GETTING AROUND

Bicycle

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

Bus

Bosnia and Hercegovina's bus network is comprehensive and reliable, although some buses verge on the decrepit. Some services between distant towns may be limited. As in other matters, the Federation and RS run separate services. Stowing luggage usually costs up to 2KM per item, depending on the route. Buses usually run on time, although they are slow due to winding roads and occasional stops for drivers and passengers to eat and smoke.

Sample fares are 13.50KM for Mostar to Sarajevo, 23KM for Sarajevo to Jajce and 16KM from Banja Luka to Bihać. Generally, reservations aren't really necessary except on international buses or on infrequent long-distance services during holiday times.

Car & Motorcycle

Narrow roads, hills and bends in the countryside slow down car driving and make for challenging motorcycling. Some drivers believe they're immortal and drive like maniacs, overtaking on sharp curves, but vigilant roadside police with speed cameras often catch them.

AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATIONS

The **Automobile Association of Bosnia & Hercegovina** (Map p91; ☎ 033-212 771; www.bihamk.ba; Skenderija 23, 71000 Sarajevo) offers road assistance and towing services for members. A membership costs 25KM per year.

HIRE

Car rental is available in the bigger cities with prices from €40/250 for one day/week with unlimited mileage. In Sarajevo **Lami Rent a Car** (☎ 061 260 609) charges from €33 a day. There's no problem with driving hire cars between the country's different entities.

ROAD RULES

Driving is on the right, seat belts must be worn and the tolerated level of alcohol in the blood is 0.05. Speed limits are 60km/h for urban roads and 80km/h for rural roads.

