

<http://www.a-girlwhotravels.com/2015/06/22/bosnia-and-herzegovina-heaven-on-earth-waiting-to-be-discovered/>

## **Bosnia and Herzegovina: Heaven on Earth Waiting to Be Discovered** written by A Girl Who Travels

Published on 22/06/2015



**Red currant fields and square-shaped houses resembling toy blocks slowly disappearing in the distance, an occasional fruit merchant perched by the roadside...**

If you're entering Bosnia and Herzegovina through its Croatian border with Dubrovnik, there isn't much that will prepare you for its beauty. The country's charm catches you off guard. As soon as your heart sinks at the sight of bullet marks still visible in some buildings or at the concrete walls of housing estates marking the war and post war-period, Bosnia and Herzegovina surprises you with a sight so stunning that it makes you look twice, wishing that you wouldn't have to leave. Emerald rivers, waterfalls, rolling hills overlooking the country's many lakes, the ottoman heritage which makes you feel as if you suddenly found yourself in Turkey... Bosnia and Herzegovina is a mosaic of natural beauty and fascinating culture. The best thing about it? It's still very much a road less travelled amongst Europe's popular routes which means that you can have a piece of this green paradise (almost) all to yourself. Without further ado, let's find out what makes this charming little country so unique and why you should visit this summer!

## **LANDSCAPES AND NATURE**

I am yet to visit a country in Europe where every river is emerald in colour and so crystal clear that it's practically see-through. From the charming Vrelo Bosne park in Sarajevo, the mirror-like riverside in Republika Srpska's Trebinje to Kravice waterfalls, the list of BiH's natural wonders seems to have no end.



*View of the Neretwa River from Počitelj's castle ruins.*



*Kravice Waterfalls.*



*Vrelo Bosne, in Sarajevo.*



*Driving between Mostar and Sarajevo will make you feel like you got sucked into a postcard!*



*How's this for picture perfect? The river running through Trebinje in crystal-clear, as you can see from this mirror-like reflection.*

## ARCHITECTURE

*Stari Most* in Mostar is the country's most recognisable landmark but certainly not the only one worth visiting. Although Bosnia and Herzegovina has suffered significant damages during the war, it's home to fascinating architecture, where Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian influence mix with its modern-day identity.



*Stari Most in Mostar*





*The buildings of Počitelj, a small town perched on the banks of the Neretwa river.*



*Colourful little houses in Trebinje.*



*Not too shabby – the view from my living room window in Sarajevo's Old Town.*

## GREAT FOOD

Food in Bosnia and Herzegovina is a perfect reflection of the country's historical heritage – just like the buildings in Sarajevo, the local cuisine combines its Western roots with Turkish and Middle Eastern influence. This is great news for all fellow sweet toothers – baklava, halva and Turkish delight are available in opulence, and the ever-present smell of freshly brewed coffee is a reminder of the country's coffee culture, dating back to the Ottoman times. Vegetarians and those on a gluten-free diet may be slightly disappointed – aside from the sweets, the local cuisine consists mainly of meat and bread. The good news is, most dishes are organic and produced locally. Not only that, food in BiH is very cheap by the Western European standards – you can indulge in the country's culinary staples for less than €10 a day!



*Happiness comes in many forms and Bosnian coffee is one of them! Remember not to make the mistake of calling it Turkish – although they look similar, Bosnian and Turkish coffee are prepared differently.*



*Don't leave Bosnia and Herzegovina without trying tufahije – poached apples stuffed with walnuts, generously coated in syrup and served with whipped cream.*



*You can't go wrong with ćevapčići – they are delicious, filling, and will only cost you a couple of euros!*



*Behold: sarajevski sahan consisting of stuffed onions (sogan dolma), stuffed vine leaves and minced meat. All this for just €6!*

## FRIENDLY LOCALS

It's not just the sights that make a trip to Bosnia and Herzegovina such an unforgettable experience – the country's beauty and undeniable charm lies in the smiles of the locals and their genuine friendliness. There are only two places in the world where, within just of couple of hours of my arrival, I felt completely at home – New York City and Mostar, the first town I visited in Bosnia and Herzegovina. NYC and the quiet, centuries old Mostar couldn't seem to have less in common and yet, that feeling of being unjudgementally welcome which I experienced in both, puts Bosnia and Herzegovina on top of my travel favourites list. During my solo travels through BiH, complete strangers would invite me for coffee to then share their stories, often involving their memories of the 1992 war. I would get shown around hidden nooks and crannies by people who were not only kind enough to spend their time with a stranger, but also didn't expect any payment in return.



*Chit chats with strangers over a cup of freshly boiled coffee became a norm during my travels through BiH.*



## **LAST BUT NOT LEAST... IT'S CHEAP!**

Unlike most places in Europe, Bosnia and Herzegovina offers sights to behold without going too hard on your wallet. It's basically a solo traveller's paradise – you can easily find accommodation for as little as €10/room in the off-season (this includes even the popular cities like Mostar) while dining out costs as little as 3.5 – 10KM (€2-5). Public transport is also surprisingly affordable – to give you an idea, a 5 hour bus ride from Mostar to Sarajevo will cost €10, while a train ride on the same route will set you back a mere €5. Sounds too good to be true? All the more reasons to see for yourself...

**Over to you – have you been to Bosnia and Herzegovina, or perhaps you're planning a visit? If it's the latter then I hope you found this post helpful!**