DISCOVER THE DANUBE IN SERBIA

NATIONAL TOURISM ORGANISATION of SERBIA
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The Danube is, from source to mouth, a river of fascinating diversity and opportunities. Its source is the object of controversies and its mouth expands year by year. The river’s length is counted upstream not downstream. Throughout its history the river has played a major role both as a link and a border, a lifeline and a theatre of war, a source of challenge and inspiration. Streams of migration and colonization have generated a diversity of cultures and traditions that the river itself communicates.

Today the Danube is the longest West-East waterway and the second longest river on the Continent. Ten nations, four capitals, numerous regions and nationalities are linked by the Danube. This makes travelling on and along the Danube look like a visit to a museum of European history, with European landscapes, lifestyles, festivals, celebrations and much more exhibited along the way. This unique experience offers a diverse, colourful programme, embracing not only the past and the present but also a strong potential for the future.

**The Danube – Facts and Figures**

- **Total length:** 2888 km
- **Navigability:** 2414 km (from Kehlheim)
- **Speed of the Current:** 2 to 4.3 km/h
- **Adjoining countries:** Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova, Ukraine
- **Adjoining capitals:** Vienna, Bratislava, Budapest, Belgrade
THE SERBIAN DANUBE

From the vast Pannonian Plain to the spectacular Djerdap Canyon, the Danube offers a large variety of landscapes and cultural impressions. Large tributary rivers like the Tisza, the Sava, the Morava and the Timok make it an opulent and cozy waterway to travel on for 588 km. The river’s landscape comprises extensive wetlands with river bays, sandbanks, islands and clear lakes, accompanied with thick, ancient forests, canyons and valleys. The rich biodiversity of flora and fauna is well preserved by natural heritage protection status. Cultural heritage from past and present is equally abundant with scenic castles and monasteries, Roman fortifications and prehistoric settlements on the one hand and villages with fertile vineyards and fields or modern cities offering a wide variety of sports, leisure and recreational activities on the other.

Facts and Figures

- **Length**: 588 km
- **Navigability**: all
- **River surface**: 102,350 km²
- **Maximum width**: 7 km (near Golubac)
- **Minimum width**: c. 150 m (Djerdap Canyon)
- **Maximum depth**: 90 m
- **Main tributary rivers**: Sava, Tisza, Tamis, Morava, Nera and Timok
- **National parks**: 2
- **Dams**: 2
- **Capital**: Belgrade (1.5 m inhabitants)
  Novi Sad, capital of Vojvodina: 250,000 inhabitants
- **Other major cities**: Smederevo, Veliko Gradište, Golubac, Donji Milanovac, Kladovo
Riverbank under shady trees, grasslands, swamps and ancient forests are the Serbian contribution to the programme for those entering from Hungary by waterway. As a border with Croatia, the Danube crosses the flat and fertile Vojvodina countryside, interrupted by the Fruška Gora chain of soft hills. Amidst affluent vegetation and vast fields, small villages and picturesque towns with ancient monasteries and historic sites lie. They are linked by roads and trails leading back to the river and its Čardases, typical Serbian fish restaurants displaying rustic fish kettles with succulent fish dishes served in a traditional ambience.

Entering the Green Belt: FROM BEZDAN TO BAČKA PALANKA

Tip

A carriage ride in Sombor needs not to be limited to museums, churches and squares. Carriage drivers can also take you to the damask weaving mill in Bezdan, where weaving of this precious fabric is still run in the traditional way. Such an excursion can be nicely rounded off by sampling local fish and meat dishes accompanied by tamburica sounds in the neighbouring Čarda.
Opportunities around the Danube

• **Apatin and Sombor** are two little baroque pearls with enchanting churches and villas, numerous green open spaces and the flair of the old Habsburg time. **Apatin**, until 1944 the largestGerman community in Yugoslavia, is still well-known today for its local brewery (Jelen Pivo). The city’s beautiful new port is well equipped and modern, making a stop here easy and pleasant.

Sombor’s notable architecture is best appreciated from one of its famous horse drawn carriages, which drive you through fragrant tree-lined alleys reminiscent of past times. Wine, fish dishes and tamburica music are also part of the overall experience here.

• **Nature reserve Karadjordje**: Hunting, fishing and horseback riding are the motto of the **National Park Karadjordjevo** near Bačka Palanka. The Lippizan stud, one of the oldest in Europe, is found here as well as a popular big-game preserve, which not only gives refuge to the Danube stag, but also to infinite species of fish and birds. Short excursions through this green paradise lead to the Bodjani Monastery from the 14th Century, to the Templer Monastery and to the Fortress of Bač.

• **Čardas**: When the chefs of numerous Danube Čardas (fish restaurants) meet for the big annual fish soup cooking contest, a festive mood reigns in Bezdan and Bačka Palanka. It is not only the testing of fine culinary samples, but also the vibrant atmosphere on the streets and squares with all their small entertainment offerings that makes this such a great experience.

**Did you know…**

...that the world’s **biggest kettle** (registered in the Guinness Book of Records) is in Bačka Palanka?
...that Sombor is the city with the most green spaces (**17 000 trees, 150 000 m² parks**) in Serbia?
...in Apatin, there is one of Serbia’s largest traditional **beer breweries**?
Monasteries and Wine:

THE FRUŠKA GORA

The **Fruška Gora** is the only “mountain range” in Vojvodina. The highest summit is barely 500 m high. Its fertile slopes, excellent for the cultivation of grapes and wine, reach to the Danube’s shores. The wine regions of Nestin and Erdevik have made a name for themselves. As famous as the wines (but better hidden in the forests) are the 16 medieval monasteries of the Fruška Gora, which have given the region the nickname “The Serbian Mount Athos”.

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Did you know...

.....that the great war with the Turks, in which the Ottomans pushed to the gates of Vienna, ended in Sremski Karlovci with the **Treaty of Karlowitz** in 1699?

...that **over 150 types of fossils** were discovered in the geological dig site in the Fruška Gora (Cerevički potok)?

...that the oldest Serbian publications from Vojvodina are books on wine-making (**The Book of the Experienced Vintner** (1783) by Zaharije Orfelin)?
Opportunities around the Danube

- **Sremski Karlovci**: In no other place in Serbia will you find as many monuments from the Baroque as in Sremski Karlovci. Many important institutions such as the Lower and the Upper Church, the Fountain of the Four Lions, the Patriarch’s Palace, as well as simple family homes with curved entryways, old firm names, and arched windows, combine to make the city a “living” open-air museum.

- **Monasteries**: The most famous of 16 medieval monasteries in the area are **Greteg, Hopovo, Jazak, Krusedol and Velika Remeta**, all with well-preserved architecture and valuable frescoes from the Middle Ages.

- **Wineries**: In the Fruška Gora region, there are over 60 wineries competing for customers. The Bermet wines of the region are especially renowned.

**Tip**

The Honey Museum in Sremski Karlovci gives an insight into the region’s long tradition of honey production and bee-keeping, as well as a rich assortment of the types of honey produced in the area.
The capital of Vojvodina, rich in traditions and featuring well-preserved Gothic, Baroque, Neoclassical and Secession architecture, numerous museums, and an imposing fortress, has found a connection to modern rhythms. This has been achieved not only through internationally-acclaimed music festival EXIT, one of the best music festivals in Europe, but also through many other cultural, business and leisure opportunities in this dynamic city, presented through 13 institutions of higher education and many international fairs and exhibitions.

**Tip**

Besides its over 12000 arrow slits and 400 cannon emplacements, the Petrovaradin Fortress contains many *underground passages and caves*, distributed over 4 levels and stretching for over 16 kilometres. By appointment only, it is possible to have a guided tour of this secret labyrinth.
• **Sightseeing:** The most prominent sight in the city is the Petrovaradin Fortress. Within its large area, you can visit over 88 art galleries and the City Museum and enjoy a scenic view of the Danube. On the other side of the river, Freedom Square is the centre of the mostly auto-free town centre. The Church of St. Mary, with its colourful roof shingles, and the City Hall should not be missed. Many other sights are also close by, including the Church of St. Nicholas, from 1730, one of the city’s oldest churches; the Art Galleries of Ma
tica Srpska, with over 5000 works of art; the Synagogue, from 1909 and many beautiful homes and villas from the 18th, 19th and early 20th Centuries.

• **Shopping:** The pedestrian zone between the Danube and Freedom Square is surrounded by many shopping arcades, which offer a wide variety of products. Many small cafes, street performers and beautiful, small courtyards create a diverse and relaxed atmosphere for shopping.

• **Entertainment:** One of the most popular meeting points in Novi Sad is Laze Telečkog Street, in which all different tastes are catered to in a Chinese Teahouse, an Italian wine restaurant, a French cafe and many other bars, cafes and adjoining restaurants. The beautiful Danube Park, the Fortress, the beach, and the recreation area on the island of Ribarsko Ostrvo are also popular sites for a visit. Besides the well-known EXIT Festival, the NOMUS Festival and the Jazz Festival are also prominent in the annual calendar of events, as well as many other theatre and folk festivals such as the Summer Film Festival.

• **Estates (Salashes) in the Surrounding Area:** Well-preserved country estates from the 18th and 19th Centuries (called Salashes in Serbian) offer an interesting sight for an excursion in the area around Novi Sad. Here you can get a feeling for village life in Vojvodina in a stylish setting. Excellent meals, local music, horseback riding and tastefully furnished rooms complete this experience.

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**Did you know...**

...that Novi Sad bought its status as a Free City and its name from the court in Vienna for 80,000 forint in 1748?
...that the hands of the clock at Petrovaradin were reversed on purpose (the small hand shows minute, the large hours) so that passing ships could recognize the time better?
...that Petrovaradin is one of the largest fortresses in Europe?
Lakes, sand banks, islands, water labyrinths - the Danube and Tisza have created a wild and romantic landscape in front of the gates of Belgrade. Many different species of birds nest on both sides of the Danube and its waters are rich with fish and other water animals. Many different types of rare water plants make up a diverse ecosystem, which is protected by UNESCO and the Serbian government.

**Tip**

On Carska Bara Lake near Belo Blato village to Zrenjanin, you can explore the wetland ecosystem by foot, bike or boat. The “Path of Health” leads over a marked path through the maze of ferns and wetland plants. You can also explore these waterways by an excursion boat or a rented rowboat. It is possible to see turtles, newts, foxes, deer, wild boars and even wildcats.
Did you know...

...that the Tisza "blooms" once a year? The region’s inhabitants call the unique mating ritual of the Palingenia longicaunda “the Flower of the Tisza”. This rare yellow insect lays its larvae in the muddy riverbed, where, after maturing, millions of them emerge and float to the top of the water like an unusual flower for only one day.

...that according to legend, the grave of Attila the Hun (“Etzel” in the Nibelungenlied) is hidden under one of the diverted estuaries in the area of the mouth of the Tisza? To this day, no one has found the grave or the legendary treasures of this great warrior king.

Opportunities around the Danube

• The confluence of the Tisza and the estuaries at Kovilj and Gardinovac with their well-forested banks, winding waterways, secluded lakes and small pools are a paradise for fishing, sports and beach tourism. In the area’s small villages time seems to have stood still, but working and living conditions are still much better than they used to be. Fresh products from the region can be found at lively local farmer’s markets.

• The Nature Preserve of Carska Bara is home to over 240 species of birds. Many other rare plant and animal species live in these wetlands. Nature lovers and bird watchers will find a wide range of opportunities here.
BELGRADE: Something for Everyone

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The mixture makes it. Old and new, past and present come together in Belgrade. The capital that lies on the confluence of two rivers - the Danube and the Sava was first settled by the Celts and has been destroyed and rebuilt 40 times. This explains why today roman walls and modern high-tech architecture; concrete socialist apartment buildings, wonderfully-restored villas and houses; richly-decorated churches; small, secluded neighbourhoods with vine-clad courtyards and flower-filled terraces and major traffic arteries are all found together here. But above all, it is the feeling of bustling, positive energy found in the streets, squares, restaurants and cafes during the long, warm summer months what gives this multi-faceted city its character. The Danube Promenade, with its many barges and houseboats, is often still full of pedestrians till the wee hours of the morning.
• **Sightseeing:** Kalemedgan Fortress is one of the oldest landmarks of the city. The museums and galleries inside the fortress, as well as the beautiful old park, restaurants and the view of the Danube and the Save invite you to visit and stay a while. Nearby you can enjoy a diverse sightseeing program, with different museums, galleries, churches, a mosque and a synagogue.

• **Shopping:** Whether in the historically protected pedestrian zone along Knez Mihailova Street with its many renowned boutiques and shops or in one of the lively markets around the city, shopping is one of the most beloved activities of Belgrade’s residents. Enjoy the wide variety of offers and possibilities!

• **Entertainment:** Belgrade’s offer is not limited only to water sports on the recreational island Ada Ciganlija, boat trips on the rivers, bike rides on the Danube Promenade or a stroll through the Bohemian quarter of Skardarlija. There is also plenty for any culinary taste, with or without dancing.

• **Surrounding Area:** Belgrade is a perfect starting place for many excursions. You can take a bus to the archaeological site in Vinča, a boat to the Roman ruins of Viminacium or to the Iron Gate, historical train to the picturesque fortress of Smederevo or a hike to the mountaintop of Avala. There is a rich assortment to choose from.

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**Did you know...**

...that the Blue Train, which the former President of Yugoslavia Tito used to travel throughout Yugoslavia, still stands operational in the main train station of Belgrade? With this train or the Romantic Express, modern technology and historical ambience allow you to enjoy the Danube and its beautiful surroundings without stress. One of the routes of the historical train stretches from Belgrade to Smederevo.

...that St. Sava’s Church is the largest orthodox church in South-Eastern Europe and one of the largest of the world?
Green hills, orchards, vineyards and vegetable fields surrounding small villages from the time of the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary define this region. In the vicinity of the Danube, you can see sand dunes up to 15 km long, thick with vegetation. These are part of the nature preserve Deliblatska Peščara, with many different animal and plant species. Medieval fortresses and many archaeological sights give interesting, yet artistic views into the history of the region. After the city of Ram, the Danube forms the border between Serbia and Romania.

**Tip**

Discover one of Serbia’s cultural tourism routes named “Road of the Roman Emperors.”, stretching along the Danube to Niš and containing many important sights from the Roman Empire. 16 out of 52 Roman emperors were born in Serbia, among them Constantine the Great. The picturesque archaeological site Felix Romuliana at Gamzigrad is under UNESCO protection.
• **Bela Crkva, Vršac, Kovačica** - Cobblestone streets, old facades, towers and churches complete the scenery of the historic cities of *Bela Crkva* and *Vršac*. The Slovak village of *Kovačica* on the right side of the Danube next to Pančevo has become synonymous with naive folkart in Serbia. Here you can see artists at work and experience the old festivals and traditions.

• **Fortresses and Archeological Sites** - The archeological artifacts in the small exhibition at *Donja Vinča* date back to the Stone Ages, showing the life of settlers who lived here almost 4000 years ago. In *Viminacium* near Požarevac you can see the impressive paintings on the Roman tombs, the baths and other open-air sites and even participate in a dig. Powerful fortresses on the river illustrate the history of Habsburg and Turkish wars. This can be seen in Smederevo, where 25 towers and fortress walls cover an area over 26 hectares, or at *Ram*, where one of the first sites for installing cannons was made.

• **Relaxation and Adventure** - Discover the nature preserves, forests and old Danube arms on foot, by boat or by bicycle. Tourist information, reservation sites and rentals are available in Veliko Gradište located on Silver Lake. Guided tours to *Labudovo Okno* (the Swan Grotto), or to the *Medieval Games in Požarevac* can also be found on the Pek River which flows into a gold producing region. Silver Lake is an oxbow lake which is an arm of the Danube. It is kept clean through the water filtration system of sand dunes. It is a popular tourist destination for its beautiful beaches and modern spa area with a wide assortment of sports and recreational activities.

**Did you know...**

...that Serbia is one of the world’s leading producers of plum products? Besides jams and juices, the most well-known product is the plum brandy, more famously known as *Sljivovica*. 
At one time, this giant natural gate only seemed open for the Danube itself. Millions of years ago, the river cut a path here through high, sheer cliffs of the Carpathians, where a narrow, crooked reef in shallow water made the river nearly impassable until the 20th century. Eddies, whirlpools, and shallow waters caused countless shipwrecks. Today the stream is tamed by the huge dam at Djerdap, but this almost 100km stretch of the river still flows through one of the most spectacular Danube landscapes. The river flows through two canyons and three gorges, in which the narrowest point is only 150m wide, with 200m to 500m high cliffs towering above the river’s surface.

**Did you know...**

- that there are large amounts of caviar in the waters at the front of the Iron Gate dam?
- that the Romans built a 3000m long road and a canal through this part of the Danube and that from 1916 a locomotive towed ships up the river from here?
- that the city of Rome gave the museum in Kladovo a copy of the frescoes from the famous Trajan’s column as a gift?
• **Golubac and Djerdap National Park:** The soaring towers of the Golubac Fortress on the narrow Danube banks, with their arrow slits and walls, form a picturesque view at the beginning of the Iron Gates. The Danube is up to 7 km wide here due to the dam, appearing to be a large lake. Conditions for sailing and surfing are ideal. The Danube flows for 7 km to the Dam at Djerdap 1 through the nature preserve of Djerdap. The mountain peaks offer a spectacular panorama with fascinating cliffs intersected by caves, mountain streams and waterfalls. Outstanding cultural and historical sights simply demand to be visited as well. The artefacts from Lepenski Vir near the village of Donji Milanovac show one of the oldest European cultures. The archaeological excavations brought cult objects, ruins and everyday objects from a culture over 8000 years old to light. Towering above the surface of the river is the Sign of Trajan, from the year 103 AD evidencing that the Roman emperor Trajan had successfully built a road through the daunting gorge. Between Donji Milanovac and Kladovo, the Danube flows through the two narrowest gorges at Mali Kazan (Small Kettle) and Veliki Kazan (Large Kettle).

• **Kladovo:** This small town at the end of the national park offers not only a tranquil town centre, but also an interesting and diverse sightseeing programme. The City Museum displays many artefacts excavated in archaeological digs in the area, as well as interesting information about the region and the river dam project. The Lock Museum offers a look at the giant machines and the draining of the locks on the river. The 34 m high and 1278 m wide dam was built as a cooperative project between Romania and Yugoslavia in 1972 and even today the power station supplies large areas of Serbia with electricity. In areas around Kladovo, you can find the ruins of a Turkish and Roman fortress, as well as the pillars of the ancient Bridge of Trajan. The legendary bridge stretched over 1127m and was underpinned by twenty pillars helping the Romans to final victory over the Dacians.

• **Negotin and Surroundings:** Near Kladovo the Danube curves to the right bypassing the mountains and forests of Deli Jovan, Vratna and Allja. An impressive natural wonder is a large stone gate formed by cliffs, but appearing to be man-made. Deer and many bird species are at home here in this wild landscape. The last large Serbian town before the river reaches the Bulgarian border is Negotin, which is the centre of a wine-making region. Many renowned types of wine come from here, which you can taste in local wine cellars in a beautiful setting.

**Tip**

In the medieval village of Rajac near Negotin you will find that wine tasting is still done in the traditional way in a historic setting. At the same time, you have a scenic view of the mountaintops and forests surrounding this beautiful village.
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