

**Preparing for Your Journey: *Undiscovered Albania*
with Macedonia-Kosovo-Serbia**

Visa: There is no entry visa needed for USA or Canadian citizens to any of the countries of the Western Balkans. There is entry tax of 10 EURO to be paid at the entrance in Albania.

Electrical: All of the countries use European electrical plugs (with two pins) and it is 240 Volts.

Currency Exchange Rates as of 5/20/14. Please note these are bank rates given on the web.

Albania: Lek, 1 USD = 102.2 LEK

Macedonia: Dinar, 1 USD = 44.9 MKD

Kosovo : Ethnic Albanians (Southern areas) : Euro , 1 EURO = 1.37 USD ; Ethnic Serbs (Northern areas)

Serbian Dinar, 1 USD = 84.3 RSD

In Macedonia and Serbia ATMs are plentiful and easy to find, as are exchange kiosks. In Albania you need the Albanian lek and your driver/guide will take you to a bank when you cross into Albania. Kosovo uses euros so buy enough in Montenegro, as you don't have much time in Kosovo and ATMs are not as easy to find. Serbia's dinar is different from Macedonia's denar.

In the shops only the local currency is accepted - EURO could be accepted in some restaurants.

Credit cards are not readily accepted in Albania, Macedonia, Kosovo. Mainly only gift shops will accept credit cards, often not restaurants.

Meal Cost: you can enjoy a nice lunch for approx 7-10 euro; dinner 12-15 euro. If you like fish--as I do-- Ohrid is known for their special trout. The meals in Albania and Macedonia are very inexpensive. Especially Macedonia. I love salads so I had gigantic ones every day for \$3 to \$4. With your guide's help. You can ask and they will be happy to accommodate any requests to include in your salad. Belgrade prices tend to be similar to prices in other trendy European cities.

Tipping: The general guide is 3.5 euro per day per person for the accompanying driver/guide. Tipping local guides and in restaurants is not obligatory but if you feel you received exemplary service 10% is fine at restaurants and 10 eur to local guides for a 2 hr tour is fine.

Weather: Mostly sunny and comfortable with sea breezes; can be chilly in evenings and chilly in the mountain areas. Some rain may occur in Kosovo or Serbia.

What to Pack All regions are very casual, so you do not need any formal clothes. Sunglasses, sunscreen, light tops but also a long sleeve shirt to layer over, long pants/skirts/dresses, fleece or sweater, rain jacket or umbrella. Layers for the mountain areas. Comfortable walking shoes or sneakers.

Sarong - big scarf can be handy as you can tie it around your shorts, shoulders or head while entering churches or mosques.

Appropriate clothes to enter to the Orthodox Monasteries - covered knees and shoulders and head to enter into the mosque - take off your shoes and sometimes requested to cover your head.

Flashlight can be handy (even in some churches to see the frescos better).

Misc: Please be aware that in the Balkans, people smoke a lot and everywhere! We do request non-smoking rooms and try to avoid restaurants where smoke is excessively heavy.