






# Balkan Explorer

## Tour Overview

 <b>Start Point</b> Athens	 <b>End Point</b> Athens	 <b>Meals</b> 15 Breakfasts   1 Lunch   8 Dinners	 <b>Transport</b> Air- conditioned coach	 <b>Tour Type</b> Fully- guided tour
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## Itinerary

### Day 1: Start of tour in Athens

 Dinner  Dorian Inn

Meet up with your tour leader and group at the Athens hotel this morning. Then, enjoy an orientation tour of Greece's capital. For authentic Greek cuisine, join the optional Athens Food Tour. Afterwards, join the unmissable guided tour of the Acropolis! Due to popularity, this excursion must be pre-booked. Tonight, enjoy a welcome dinner at a local restaurant.

#### Included:

ABE - Explore Athens, Greece's ancient capital city

ABE - Enjoy a welcome dinner in Athens

#### Optionals:

Athens Food Tour

Acropolis Guided Tour

### Day 2: Delphi - Meteora - Kalabaka

 Breakfast  Hotel Antoniadis

Travel through the Greek mainland, stopping in Delphi along the way. In antiquity, Delphi was considered the "omphalos" (navel) of the earth. Arrive in Meteora this afternoon. This dramatic series of rock formations is home to a large complex of Eastern Orthodox monasteries. Explore St. Stephen's Monastery, founded in 1400. Later, enjoy an optional Greek evening in the Meteora Foothills.

#### Included:

ABE - Explore the ancient ruins of Delphi

ABE - Marvel at the monasteries of Meteora

#### Optionals:

Greek Evening in the Meteora Foothills

### Day 3: Kalabaka - Ohrid


 Breakfast, Dinner  Hotel Belvedere

Travel to North Macedonia and the undiscovered jewel of Ohrid. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, this city is one of the oldest human settlements in Europe. Explore the Old Town on a guided tour and see famous sights, including the Church of St. John at Kaneo, which is on a cliff overlooking Lake Ohrid. Enjoy an included dinner this evening.

#### Included:

ABE - Embark on a guided tour of Ohrid

### Day 4: Ohrid - Tirana - Shkodër

 Breakfast, Lunch  Hotel Rozafa

Depart North Macedonia and journey to its Balkan neighbour Albania, driving into the capital city, Tirana. Enjoy an included lunch before setting off on a walking tour. Discover buildings painted in bright colours and fascinating Ottoman, Italian and Communist architecture. After some free time, head to the historic city of Shkodër where the group will enjoy a free evening.

**Included:**

ABE - Discover Tirana on a walking tour

ABE - Spend an evening in Shkodër

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**Day 5: Shkodër - Budva - Kotor - Dubrovnik**

 Breakfast  Hotel Ivka, Dubrovnik

Heading north, travel through Montenegro. First stop is the picturesque town of Budva, known for its well-preserved medieval walls, with free time to explore. Next, enjoy a guided tour of the UNESCO World Heritage-listed town of Kotor. Later, continue to Croatia. On arrival in Dubrovnik, head to the entrance gate to the Old Town. Enjoy a free evening to explore.

**Included:**

ABE - Explore Budva and Kotor in Montenegro

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**Day 6: Dubrovnik: Free Day**

 Breakfast  Hotel Ivka, Dubrovnik

This morning, join a locally-guided walking tour of the Old Town to see the Franciscan Monastery, the City Walls and more. The rest of the day is free! For the ultimate experience in Dubrovnik, opt for the Blue Cave Boat Tour excursion. Marvel at Dubrovnik's picture-perfect islands and azure caves while cruising in crystal-clear waters with a drink in hand!

**Included:**

ABE - Experience a guided walking tour of Dubrovnik

**Optionals:**

Blue Cave Boat Tour

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**Day 7: Dubrovnik - Mostar - Sarajevo**

 Breakfast, Dinner  Ibis Styles Sarajevo

Today, cross the border into Bosnia and Herzegovina - a country filled with rich history, culture and natural scenery! Arrive in Mostar which is famous for its Stari Most Bridge. Enjoy free time before travelling to Sarajevo, the Bosnian capital later this afternoon. Upon arrival, set off on a locally-guided tour. This evening, enjoy an included dinner.

**Included:**

ABE - Visit Mostar

ABE - Take a walking tour of Sarajevo

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**Day 8: Sarajevo - Split - Plitvice Lakes**

 Breakfast, Dinner  Plitvice Lakes Etno Garden

Depart Bosnia and Herzegovina and head back to Croatia. Arrive in Split for an orientation tour of the picturesque Old Town. Admire the Baroque architecture of Fruit Square, see Diocletian's Palace and wander along the bustling Split Riva waterfront before enjoying free time. Later, travel to tonight's accommodation in the Plitvice Lakes region. Dinner is included at the hotel.

**Included:**

ABE - Explore Split, an idyllic coastal city

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**Day 9: Plitvice Lakes - Ljubljana**

 Breakfast  B&B Hotel Ljubljana Park

Today, visit one of the most picturesque natural landscapes in Europe! The Plitvice Lakes National Park is famous for its cascading waterfalls and dynamic landscape. Next, travel to Ljubljana, Slovenia's charming capital. Join a local guide on a walking tour. Later, choose to join the Taste of Ljubljana optional excursion to discover Slovenia's exceptional wine and cuisine!

**Included:**

ABE - Explore Plitvice Lakes National Park

ABE - Discover the magic of Ljubljana with a local guide

**Optionals:**

Taste of Ljubljana

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## Day 10: **Ljubljana - Maribor - Lake Balaton - Budapest**

 **Breakfast, Dinner**  **ibis Styles Budapest Center**

Before crossing the border into Hungary, stop in Maribor, Slovenia's second-largest city. Then, visit Hungary's Lake Balaton. This dazzling freshwater lake is a popular holiday destination. Later, arrive in Budapest, and embark on a driving tour of Hungary's captivating capital. See top sights such as the Castle District and the Hungarian Parliament buildings. Enjoy an included dinner with the group.

### **Included:**



ABE - Stop in Maribor

ABE - Visit Lake Balaton

ABE - Embark on a driving tour of Budapest

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## Day 11: **Budapest: Free Day**

 **Breakfast**  **ibis Styles Budapest Center**

Today is your chance to get up close and personal with Budapest! For a journey through Budapest's top sights, join the Buda vs Pest optional excursion. Visit iconic city symbols including St. Stephen's Basilica, and Fisherman's Bastion! Alternatively, soak in the thermal waters of the Budapest Baths. Tonight, enjoy mesmerising views of Budapest during an optional Danube dinner cruise!

### **Optionals:**


Buda vs Pest

Budapest Baths

Danube Dinner Cruise

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## Day 12: **Budapest - Novi Sad - Belgrade**

 **Breakfast, Dinner**  **Belgrade City Hotel**

Continue to Belgrade in Serbia. Stop in Novi Sad before arriving in Serbia's capital city and embarking on a walking tour with a local guide. See the city's highlights including Republic Square, the Bohemian Quarter (Skadarlija), Kalemegdan Park and Belgrade Fortress. The city offers an exciting mix of history, culture, grit and character! Tonight, enjoy dinner with the group.

### **Included:**

ABE - Visit Novi Sad

ABE - Embark on a guided walking tour of Belgrade

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## Day 13: **Belgrade - Niš - Sofia**

 **Breakfast, Dinner**  **Ramada by Wyndham Sofia City Center**

Enjoy a lunch stop in Niš, a historic city in south-eastern Serbia ruled by the Turks from the 14th to the 19th century. Visit the quaint cobbled streets of Tinkers Alley. Afterwards, travel to Sofia, Bulgaria's capital. Discover the main sights on a walking tour. Visit the awe-inspiring Sofia Cathedral, an icon of the city. Enjoy a group dinner tonight.

### **Included:**

ABE - Visit Tinkers Alley and enjoy a lunch stop in Niš

ABE - Enjoy a guided tour of Sofia

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## Day 14: **Sofia - Rila Monastery - Thessaloniki**

 **Breakfast**  **El Greco Hotel Thessaloniki**

Head back to Greece today. But first, experience one of Bulgaria's top cultural sights with a visit to Rila Monastery! This ancient Eastern Orthodox monastery features striking architecture and is surrounded by stunning mountain scenery. In the afternoon, arrive in Thessaloniki and embark on an orientation tour of the historic centre. Make the most of a free evening tonight.

### **Included:**

ABE - Explore Rila Monastery

ABE - Discover Thessaloniki

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## Day 15: **Thessaloniki - Kamena Vourla - Athens**

 **Breakfast, Dinner**  **Dorian Inn**

Head south through the Greek countryside. Stop in Kamena Vourla, located on the south coast of the Malian Gulf. Find a local spot for lunch in this scenic destination. Arrive in Athens later today. Check into the hotel before enjoying a farewell group dinner. This is the perfect opportunity to reminisce about an incredible time spent exploring the Balkans.


**Included:**

ABE - Visit Kamena Vourla

ABE - Enjoy a farewell dinner in Athens

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Day 16: **End of tour in Athens**

 **Breakfast**

After breakfast, this 16-day journey through the Balkans and beyond concludes. The time has come to say your goodbyes to your fellow travellers but don't forget to swap contact details to stay in touch. We hope you have enjoyed your tour with Expat Explore!

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