



The crescent-shaped bridge over the Neretva River in neighboring Mostar was built in 1566 by the order of Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent.

SARAJEVO

Yugoslavia's ancient crossroads

by Irene McMahon
drawings by Franklin McMahon

There are five Sarajevos in Europe and Asia, each named by the Turks to mean "forecourts of the palaces." The fairest of them all is said to be Sarajevo in central Yugoslavia.

Since the beginning of its turbulent history, this Sarajevo has been in the path of countless roving tribes, of armies crisscrossing its river valleys and mountains. Illyrians, Romans, Turks, and Slavs have all had their day here. Only the most steadfast citizens survived invasions, fires, and plagues that destroyed large parts of each population.

Modern Sarajevo is the capital and cultural center of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and is known to the world as the dynamic host of the 1984 Olympic Winter Games. Thousands discovered firsthand, and millions saw on television, the raw beauty of this city and its unspoiled natural environs. Byzantine domes and minarets are rimmed by mountains, dense primeval forests, translucent rivers, waterfalls, and the longest underground river in Europe. From early winter the world-class ski mountain, Trebevic, is covered with thick snows.

Bascarsija, the ancient Turkish Market, is the heart and soul of the city and its most interesting part. Its mosques, churches, and synagogues blend Eastern and Western Christianity, Islam, and Judaism.

Sarajevo's distinguished Jewish population was decimated by the Nazis in World War II. A synagogue that was built in 1580 by migrating Sephardic Jews from Spain now houses a handsome museum to honor the Jews that once resided in the Cifuthani Quarter they founded.

The Turkish invasion of the late fifteenth century was halted here before reaching the Adriatic coast. The Turks governed Sarajevo for 450 years, built their mosques, their wooden houses with ornate interiors, and their shops to sell the precious goods brought by Ottoman caravans from Asia.

Near the Bascarsija district, a most significant incident took place that shook the twentieth-century world. After the Austro-Hungarian Empire ousted the Turks in 1878, a resistance movement arose. Its violence culminated on June 28, 1914, in the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir apparent to the Austro-Hungarian throne, and his wife, Sophie, by a Bosnian Serb student. One month later, the oppressive government used this incident as an excuse to mobilize against Serbia, and this eventually triggered World War I.

On the Miljacka River at the Princip Bridge, a small but impressive museum commemorates the incident and marks the place where the youthful assassin, Gavrilo Princip, attempted his escape into the river. His footprints are embedded in the sidewalk at the site of the archduke's assassination. The Museum of the Revolution features an emotional painting of the trial. Photographs and simple possessions of captured revolutionaries and their families tell the story of hangings and hardships and final dismal years in Siberia. "We love our people" was the message the revolutionaries sent back from their death chambers.

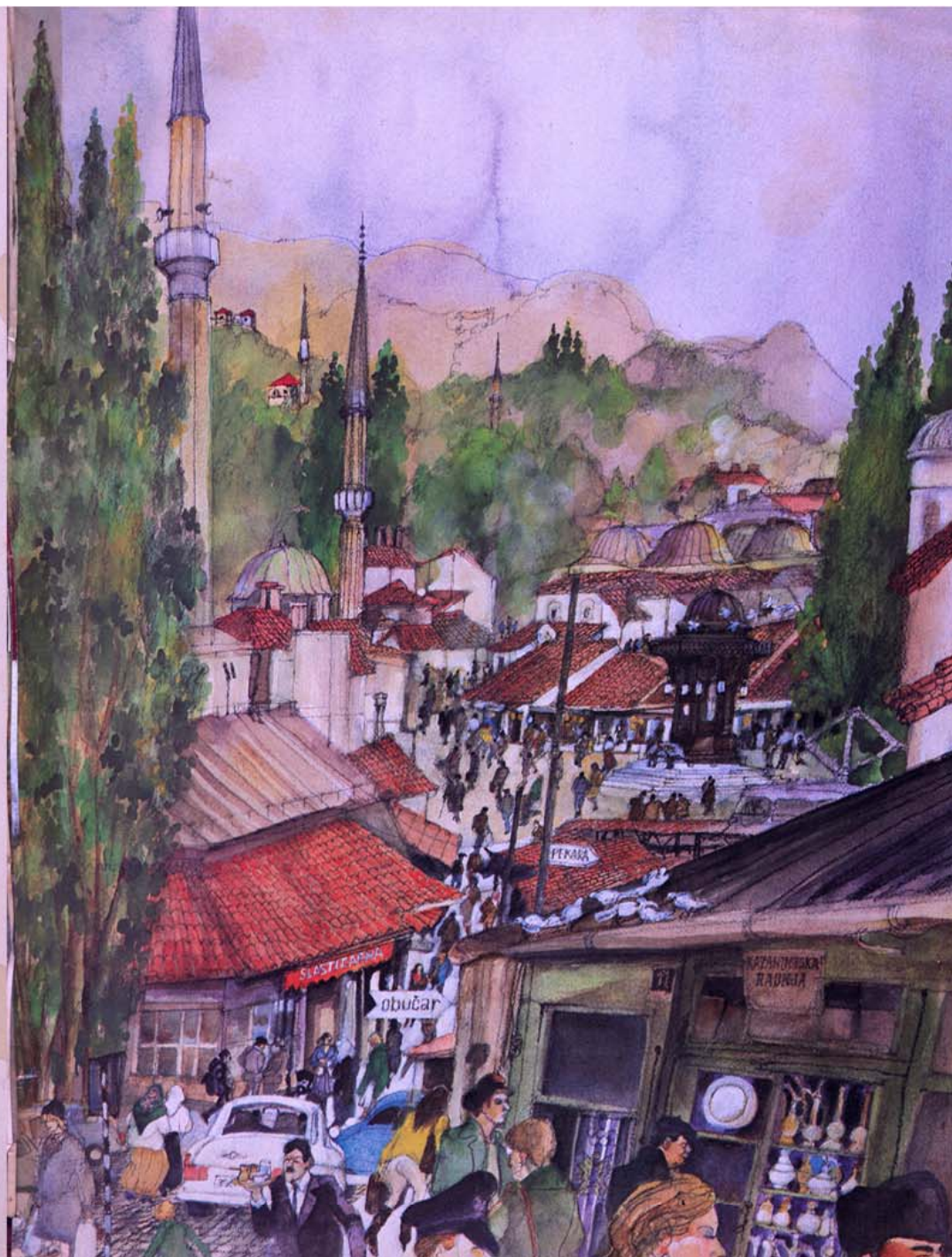
Though the Turks long since have been expelled by the Austrians, Sarajevo is still the seat of all Islam in Yugoslavia. The largest of the major mosques facing Mecca is Gazi Husreff-Bey, elaborately decorated with Arabic inscriptions and priceless rugs.

"Not many young people go to the mosques or churches today. They are studying to get jobs," said Ruzica Marinkovic, our pleasantly efficient free-lance government guide. She pointed out a late sixteenth-century clock tower adjacent to the Mosque Begova Dzamiza. The time doesn't agree with standard time but is determined by the sunrise, Muslim-style.

Most international travelers today find any time is a good time to eat here. A favorite spot is the Morica han, a restaurant within a surviving caravansary of the Ottoman period. Once an inn with warehouses and stables for horses, the attractive restaurant serves local delicacies: *gibanica* (cheese pie made with thin layers of pastry), *sarma* (stuffed cabbage or vine leaves), *musaka* (layers of eggplant with ground meat), and Zilavka wine from nearby Mostar. Inscribed in the wall are eleventh- and twelfth-century quotes of Persian poet Omar Khayyam.

A bustling part of the old market is Kazandzvluk. The coppersmith's bazaar is one of fifteen narrow streets named after the trades. Here craftsmen work as they have for centuries, and sell their large embossed copper trays and coffee containers. Other shops sell leather goods, embroidered blouses, wood carvings, carpets, silver filigree jewelry, suede slippers lined with fur, and bulky hand-knit woolens. Stop at one of the intimate coffee shops for apple or

Bascarsija, an ancient Turkish market, flourishes in central Sarajevo, rimmed by minarets, domes, forests, and mountains.





Sarajevo's diverse history is visible in the faces of its sturdy people, shown here at an outdoor fruit and vegetable market.

orange tea. A good one is Bosanska-Uafana, Number 11 Trgouke St.

On Sweets Street, shops display baklava, Oriental sweetmeats, marzipan, and chocolates. There is a bittersweet ending as East meets West. Here the Turkish quarter ends. The streets widen, the Byzantine architecture changes to Austro-Hungarian, and the city reaches out to the modern Sarajevo of contemporary hotels, Concert Hall, and National Theater. The Art Gallery exhibits the work of local artists and has an impressive collection of icons.

Much of Sarajevo's history is visible in the faces of its sturdy people. Marinkovic spoke and drove our small red van with authority. Solidly built and with short, dark hair, she always stood erect with a demanding presence. She asked us to call her "Rose" to avoid difficulties in pronunciation, although she speaks six languages: German, English, French, Russian, Hungarian, and Slavic. She told us her people have much freedom, and yet constantly reminded us of things that are "forbidden." It is forbidden to take photographs of bridges, of army installations, of people in uniform. She also told us that only about 10 percent of Yugoslavians belong to the Communist Party.

Images of Marshal Tito on all public buildings and many private ones honor the unique brand of Socialism that he initiated. When the country was overrun and occupied in 1941 by the Germans, Tito went underground and later led the Liberation Army to victory. The price for freedom was high: 1.7 million dead, one-tenth of the population. The land was devastated. The Industrial Revolution was late in coming to Yugoslavia, and as a result, many villages still retain traditional folk celebrations, customs, costumes, and cuisines. Here, in a time of rapid change, one still can glimpse moments of ancient times.

Such fleeting glimpses seem like the past frozen in time at the remains of a neolithic settlement on the outskirts of Sarajevo, or at nearby Ilidza, where at the source of the Bosna River there is a sulphurous spa still using old Roman hot springs.

The Regional Museum of Bosnia-Herzegovina has departments of archaeology, natural history, and ethnography. In the museum forecourt there is an exhibit of intricately carved monumental tombstones reminiscent of ancient Greek and Roman cities. The Sarajevo City Museum covers economic and cultural history from the neolithic period until the end of the Turkish occupation. Memories of recent proud Olympic days are preserved in

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the former Olympic Press Building's exhibition of memorabilia and photographs of the winter of 1984.

The towns of Mostar and Medjugorje are joined to Sarajevo by good but narrow roads, and each reveals another segment of Yugoslavia's past struggles and successes. Near Mostar is a beautiful stone fortress, its red tile roofs nestling into the mountains and hugging the river Neretva. It's named in Serbo-Croatian for a crescent-shaped stone bridge built by that most noted of Sultans, Suleyman the Magnificent. The stones of the bridge have been worn down over the centuries and are slippery underfoot. Adventurers not only walk over the precipitous curvature of the bridge, but jump off its edge into the Neretva—a big sport here. But after a few serious accidents, even the stalwart Yugoslavs are beginning to realize the danger of this stunt.

Mostar was once a center for Serbian scholars and poets. Today it is noted for a fine theater, museums, and symphony orchestra. The old market displays traditional crafts and the fashionable faded denims that today replace the Oriental silks of old. It's a quiet and walkable town until busloads of Germans arrive for a soccer game.

Increasing numbers of pilgrims are attracted to the nearby small village of Medjugorje, where for six years a group of young people have claimed to see apparitions of the Mother of Jesus. The official policy of the Socialist government of Yugoslavia and the Roman Catholic Vatican tends to ignore this happening, and Marinkovic insisted, "There is nothing there." More difficult to ignore are the ten million pilgrims who have visited and continue to visit the site.

While many and diverse peoples have controlled this land, its strong Muslim character remains. In addition, the mixture of peoples and cultures interwoven onto Bosnia-Herzegovina gives a unique diversity. Everywhere, amid exotic Oriental architecture, are traces of ancient history, the whole framed by overwhelming scenery. The proud individualism of a quietly heroic people is expressed in a favorite toast given with a raised glass of potent plum brandy: "Zivjeli"—"Let us Live." ■

Irene McMahon is a free-lance travel writer. Her husband, Franklin McMahon, is a world-renowned artist and a Peabody and Emmy award winner for his political-campaign drawings for CBS and PBS television documentaries.

Meetings

Sarajevo is a good choice for a side trip following a medical-study tour to Eastern Europe. Professional Seminar Consultants, Inc., leads a ten-day tour to Prague, Budapest, and Vienna from June 18 to 27 for the family medicine conference titled, "Prevention in Primary Care." Category I credits. For information, call 800/541-1345.

Another traveling medical seminar to Prague, Budapest, and Vienna is offered by Temple University School of Medicine and Professional Exchange International, October 11 to 22. Focus is on women's health care in the 1990s. Category I credits. For information, call 800/255-7390.

WEATHER CHECK

"For it giveth unto all lovers courage, that lusty month of May."

—Sir Thomas Malory

B&B owners in Cape May and up the coast in New York open their windows to welcome spring's mild temperatures. Auckland's mild winter begins as Hawaii's moderate climate enters the eighties. Chicago and Montreal both have average highs in the sixties, and Sarajevo, usually sunny, has one of its wettest months. Average high and low temperatures are given in Fahrenheit degrees and precipitation is given in inches.

Feature Destinations	High	Low	Precipitation
Auckland, New Zealand	62	51	5.0
Cape May, NJ	74	56	3.6
Chicago, IL	65	50	3.4
Honolulu, HI	80	70	1.0
Montreal, Canada	66	44	2.5
New York, NY	68	53	3.2
Sarajevo, Yugoslavia	73	54	2.9

Other Destinations

Baghdad, Iraq	97	67	0.1
Beijing, China	81	55	1.4
Cork, Ireland	61	45	2.8
Detroit, MI	67	48	3.3
Fernandina Beach, FL	80	66	3.2
Fort Worth, TX	82	63	4.5
Hankow, China	79	64	6.5
Mombasa, Kenya	83	74	12.6
Moscow, U.S.S.R.	66	46	2.1
Paris, France	68	49	2.2
San Francisco, CA	63	51	0.7
Seattle, WA	64	47	1.8
Seoul, South Korea	72	51	3.2
Venice, Italy	70	56	2.6