



# Steph's Quick Budget Fact Sheet

## Bosnia and Herzegovina - Banja Luka & Jajce

### Quick Facts

- ✓ **Capital:** Sarajevo
- ✓ **Language:** Bosnian (*Croatian, Serbian*)
- ✓ **Population:** ± 199,200 (*Banja Luka*), ± 30,800 (*Jajce*)
- ✓ **Sq km:** ± 1239 (*Mostar*), ± 3390 (*Jajce*)
- ✓ **Currency:** Mark (BAM / KM)
- ✓ **Country code:** +387
- ✓ **Visa:** Generally not required. [Info here.](#)
- ✓ **Emergency phone:** 122 (*police*), 123 (*fire*), 124 (*ambulance*).
- ✓ **Vaccinations:** Covid-19.



### History Recap Over 1 Drink

1908: Bosnia-Herzegovina (BH) annexed by Austria-Hungary. '14: Bosnian Serb student assassinates Austrian archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo → Start WWI, until '18: End of war, BH becomes part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. '41: WWII, BH annexed by pro-Hitler Croatian puppet state: 1000s Serbs, Jews and Gypsies to concentration camps. '45: BH liberated by partisans under Tito. '45-'91: Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. '91: Collapse communism → separatists win first multi-party elections and form coalition government. '92: Croat and Muslim (Bosniak) nationalists form alliance and outvote Serbs at independence referendum. Bosnian War: Serbs quickly control over half the republic → killings and deportations. '95: Safe haven of Srebrenica is overrun by Bosnian Serb forces under General Mladic: genocide of over 8,000 Muslims. NATO / Dayton Peace Accord: 2 entities of roughly equal size, one for Bosnian Muslims and Croats (Federation of BH), the other for Serbs (Republika Srpska) + international peacekeeping corps. 3 presidents: BH / Serb / external. '04: NATO hands over peacekeeping duties to a EU-led force: Eufor. '15: Stabilisation and Association Agreement, raising possibility of Bosnia joining EU → '16: applies for membership.

### Travel Seasons

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Spring												
Summer												
Autumn												
Winter												
Budget												

Altitude: 163m – Banja Luka; 388m – Jajce (highest point). Climate: Temperate oceanic climate (Cfb).

### Bucket List For Free

- ☺ **Banja Luka:** Vrbas River, Krupa Waterfalls, Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, Ferhadija Mosque, Tvrdava Castle, [Museum of Contemporary Art Republica Srpska](#).
- ☺ **Jajce:** Pliva Waterfall, Pliva Lakes, Watermills, Temple of Mithras, Bridgeway over Waterfalls.

### Worth The Extra \$€¥

- 👍 **Banja Luka:** Rafting, Museum of Republica Srpska.
- 👍 **Jajce:** Fortress of Jajce, Catacombs, [AVNOJ Museum](#), [Etnographic Museum](#).

The Earth Becomes My Throne

## Budget Bites

⌘ **Big supermarkets:** Maxi, Fortuna, mojMarket, Mercator, Best, Bingo, Konzum.

⌘ **Local food:** Cevapi (*grilled minced meat in pita bread*), Sahan (*mixed grill*), Bosanski Lonac (*meat and veg stew*), Raznjici (*Bosnian souvlaki*), Tarhana / Begova Corba / Grah (*soups*), Duvec (*stew*), Sopska Salata (*salad with cheese*), Burek (*fried stuffed bread*), Klepe (*minced meat dumplings*), Buranija (*bean-veal stew*), Prebranac (*bean stew*), Palacinke (*pancakes*), Dolma / Sarma / Japrak (*cabbage rolls*), Pljeskavica (*hamburger*), Cutfe (*meat balls*), Suho Meso (*dried meat*), Rakija (*alcoholic drink*), Ajvar (*veggie sauce*), Baklava (*sweet dessert*).

⌘ **Go veg:** Going veg is rather complicated in Bosnia, not to say almost impossible. I was on a depressing diet of salad, bread, and polenta during my entire stay. Some restaurants serve risotto (*which is vegetarian, not vegan*). Local veg dishes: Prebranac, Ajvar. Tip: ask for “*posna grana*” food, which is orthodox meat- and dairy-free fasting food – it might contain seafood, so specify: “*Bez ribe, jaja, mlečnih proizvoda i mesa.*”

## Mama Said

☠ Bosnia and Herzegovina is a safe country and the crime rate is low, especially in smaller towns. However, take your general precautions like everywhere else.

☠ Stay on the trails when hiking and steer clear of abandoned buildings, neglected land, open countryside etc. Landmines are still present after the Bosnian War.

☠ Tap water is drinkable.

☠ English is not widely spoken, not even by the younger generation. *Some* older people speak basic German. It's recommended to download the Google Translate app. Serbian / Bosnian / Croatian / Bulgarian / Montenegrin are very similar languages, so locals understand one another.

## Sleep Cheap

❖ Booking.com generally offers the cheapest deals, especially with Genius-discount. Always reconfirm the exact address, as often this is listed incorrectly or vaguely. Having a local sim card is essential for check-in communication. Wild camping in Bosnia is semi-legal, but don't go too far off trail with regards to land mines.

❖ You can check for listings on [Couchsurfing](#) / [house-sitting](#) and check [WorkAway](#).

## Festivals

☼ Fresh Wave Festival (BL): Music, Aug.

☼ Drill & Chill Festival (BL): Highlining and climbing, Sep.

☼ Vlatko Juric Days (Jajce): Folkore, July.

## Free-Riding?

■ **Walking:** Banja Luka and Jajce have rather compact centres, making walking and cycling good options to explore.

■ **Public transport** exists, but is unreliable. My only recommendation with regards to intercity buses is heading to the bus station to receive the latest information (*and even that can change by the hour*). Don't rely on online information or time schedules or apps like Rome2Rio, as they proved to be incorrect most of the times. Showing a (*fake*) student pass gives you 30-50% discounts! City buses and minivans drive around Banja Luka (*maps [here](#)*), but apps such as Google Maps don't work with regards to public transport in this country and all is written in Cyrillic. Download Google Lens for on-site translations of bus schedules, or try to ask around.

■ **Hitchhiking** is the best way to get around if you don't have your own vehicle. It isn't super common so it might include some waiting time. Also, keep in mind that English isn't generally spoken.

■ **Airport:** Banja Luka International Airport (BNX)

## Next?

➔ International destinations close by: Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro.

➔ In Bosnia and Herzegovina: Sarajevo, Mostar, Blagaj, Trebinje, Sutjeska NP.