Belgrade, the capital of Serbia, is the third largest city in South-eastern Europe after Istanbul and Athens. Just over 1,700,000 people live in it. Belgrade is the city of youth. More than 40% of its citizens are between 15 and 44 years of age.

Belgrade is a city with a tumultuous, but also frequently tragic past, primarily due to its unique position at the confluence of the Sava and Danube rivers.

Belgrade lies 116.75 metres above sea level and is located at the confluence of the Danube and
Sava
rivers. The historical core of Belgrade,
Kalemegdan
, lies on the right banks of both rivers, on the border between the East and the West.. Since the 19th century, the city has been expanding to the south and east; after World War II,
Novi Beograd
(
New Belgrade
) was built on the left bank of the Sava river, connecting Belgrade with
Zemun
. Smaller, chiefly residential communities across the Danube, like
Krnjača
,
Kotež

and
Borča
, also merged with the city, while
Pančevo
, a heavily industrialized satellite city, remains a separate town. The city has an urban area of 360 square kilometers, while together with its metropolitan area it covers 3,223 km
2
. Throughout history, Belgrade has been a crossroads between the West and
the Orient
.

Belgrade has been permanently settled since the mid Neolithic period, the time when its area played host to the Vincian culture, more than 4,000 years B.C.E.

The Greeks came later, followed by the Romans who pushed the Celts across the Sava and Danube rivers, installing their fourth legion, the Legio Flavia, at Singidunum. They built a mighty fort on the Kalemegdan ridge with a city next to it.

From the Celtic dun and the Roman castrum the city grew into a significant border fortification of the Huns and then the Byzantine emperors Anastasius and Iustinianus, the Avars, Bulgars, Ugars, Serbs, Turks and Austrians, until it became the capital of modern Serbia during the 19th century.

The name Belgrade was first recorded in a letter on April 16, 878, when Pope John VIII notified the Bulgarian Emperor Mihail Boris that he had removed from office Sergi (“episcopus Belgradensis”) due to sinful living.

Belgrade had around ten names in the past. As each conqueror claimed it, they immediately changed its name, but the new name almost always spoke of its beauty and whiteness. It was called Belgrad, Bello Grado, Alba Urbs, Alba Graeca, Griechisch Weissenburg, Nándor Fehérvár, Nándor Alba, Castelbianco. All these names are translations of the Slavic word *Beograd*
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This city, living through and surviving numerous wars and destruction during the centuries, is one of the oldest cities in Europe, and thus had a number of symbolic names, such as: House of Winds, Combat Hill, Thinking Hill, House of Freedom…

It became the capital of the Serb medieval state during the reign of King Dragutin Nemanjić who married the princess Katerina and therefore received Belgrade, Mačva and Srem as dowry from the Hungarian king, as well as during the time of Despot Stefan Lazarević who, as the vassal of the Ugric king received Belgrade in his possession, along with a number of other large estates. Only in the 19th century, at the time of the First Serbian Uprising and subsequently, during the reign of Prince Miloš, from 1841 onwards, did Belgrade become the permanent capital of the Principality, and thereafter the Kingdom of Serbia. Following World War I, in 1918, it became the capital of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and thereafter of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. After World War II it regained its position as the capital of the country of Yugoslavia that changed its name a number of times, only to become, once again and finally, the capital of Serbia.

Belgrade gradually grew from an oriental town into a modern mid-European city during the 19th century. It had 25,178 residents and 3,444 houses at the time the Turks left Belgrade in 1867.

The first electric light was switched on in Belgrade in 1882, while the first train took off towards Niš from the Belgrade railway station on August 23, 1884.

The first cobbled road in Belgrade, made up of oaken cobbles, was laid down in 1886 in Kralja Petra I Street, between Knez Mihailova and the Cathedral Church. As the spring rains started to fall, shoots sprang forth from those cobbles, to the delight of the citizens of Belgrade.

The first horse-drawn tram was engaged on October 1, 1892. Water pipelines were installed in several streets in the city center during the same year.

The first telephone rang in 1890, while the first cinema projection was held in 1896, a mere six months after the first projection by the Lumière brothers in Paris.

Belgrade had a population of 50,000 citizens and grew into a true European capital during the early 20 th century. Unfortunately, it was bombed and demolished during World War I, and the same occurred in World War II, when the Nazi Luftwaffe turned a large part of the city to dust and rubble in 1941. The cycle was repeated in 1944 when the allied Anglo-American air force repeatedly demolished large parts of the city in addition to the few remaining German military facilities. Unfortunately, another round of destruction, hopefully the last, occurred in 1999 when the NATO Alliance air force destroyed several tens of residential buildings, administrative, communal and production facilities, communications, etc. All of these bombings left behind a large number of human victims, dead, buried in the rubble or wounded.

Belgrade has more than 1,700,000 citizens today and is growing into a true metropolis. More than a quarter of the population of Serbia lives there today! The city is growing towards Šumadija, as well as towards Srem and Banat. It is becoming ever more beautiful, orderly and clean, but also increasingly frantic, since life in Belgrade is ever faster as it is in all big cities.

The makeup of the population of Belgrade often changed during the past centuries. People from all over the Balkans and central Europe moved to it, and many departed under their own volition or under duress, but those that remained became Belgraders within a generation and seldom abandoned it without pressing need.

FUN ZONE

The exciting nightlife of Belgrade is gaining momentum. Belgrade is said to be the new capital of cool, the place where the best nightlife in Europe is happening.

Bars, clubs, rafts and casinos work every day of the week. A contagious atmosphere or crazy parties and good fun rules. From alternative to reggae, brass bands and gypsy music to turbo folk, from techno to heavy metal, Belgrade is bouncing in one of its many rhythms every night.

The number of clubs is growing daily, the scene headed by a team of experienced DJs. An increasing number of music and DJ stars come to Belgrade, attracted by stories of the city that loves to dance. The defining detail of the Belgrade clubbing scene are the river banks. Ships and rafts are open throughout the year, although the largest crowd gathers, naturally, in the summer. Ada Ciganlija is a fascinating zone of nightlife in Belgrade. Visit one of the rafts on the Sava or Danube quay. Entrance to the clubs is mostly free, taxis are not expensive, and neither are alcoholic drinks. Best of all, Belgraders are a friendly bunch and will be happy to party with you.
Strahinjića Bana Street is a unique fun zone. A single city centre street houses around twenty cafes, restaurants and bars, always filled with loud and cheerful Belgraders. If you like to be in the epicentre of city life, Strahinjića Bana is the place for you.