

Free Spirit Vacations presents...

The Balkans

September 5 – 20, 2025



Book Now
& Save
\$100
Per Person

Upgrade to Elite Airfare! See inside for details.

Free Spirit
TRAVEL VACATIONS AND EVENTS

For more information contact

Free Spirit Vacations

(480) 926-5547

reservations@freespiritvacations.com

collette



Small Group Travel rewards travelers with new perspectives. With just 12-24 passengers, these are the personal adventures that today's cultural explorers dream of.

16 Days • 23 Meals: 14 Breakfasts, 1 Lunch, 8 Dinners

HIGHLIGHTS... Zagreb, Karanac Farm Stay, Osijek, Cooking Class, Sarajevo, Impact Moment: Tunnel of Hope, Mostar, Dubrovnik, Choice on Tour: Lokrum Island or Dubrovnik Cable Car, Our Lady of the Rocks, Boka Bay Scenic Sailing, Kotor, Shkodër, Tirana, Gjirokastra, Kalambaka, Meteora, Icon-Painting Workshop, Athens

ITINERARY AT A GLANCE

Day 1	Overnight Flight
Day 2	Boutique Hotel Le Premier, Zagreb
Days 3, 4	Baranjska Kuca Hotel and Etno Restaurant, Osijek
Days 5, 6	Colorsinn Hotel Sarajevo, Sarajevo
Days 7, 8	Royal Hotels & Resort Ariston, Dubrovnik
Days 9, 10	Hotel Cattaro, Kotor
Days 11, 12	Rogner Hotel Tirana, Tirana
Day 13	Hotel Divani Meteora, Kalambaka
Days 14, 15	NYX Esperia Palace Athens, Athens

On some dates alternate hotels may be used.

Day 1: Friday, September 5, 2025 Overnight Flight Set off for an adventure to the Balkans, a region where rocky coastlines and towering mountains meet a complex history and medieval cities. On your journey, generations of traditions come to life through local experiences amid stunning backdrops.

Day 2: Saturday, September 6, 2025 Zagreb, Croatia Arrive in Croatia's fascinating capital city, Zagreb. Get ready to discover this modern metropolis with its Old Town, medieval settlements, open squares, museums, and cobbled streets meant for strolling. Your day is free until tonight, when you gather with your fellow travelers for a welcome dinner. (D)

Day 3: Sunday, September 7, 2025 Zagreb - Karanac This morning, join a local guide on a walking tour of Zagreb's highlights, from the main square to Upper Town. Enjoy some free time to explore and have lunch on your own before the journey continues to the northeast corner of Croatia. Travel off the beaten path toward the rural village of Karanac, nestled at the confluence of the Drava and Danube Rivers. Tonight, meet your local hosts for a delightful dinner accompanied by folk entertainment. (B, D)

Day 4: Monday, September 8, 2025 Karanac - Osijek - Karanac Immerse yourself in country life this morning, perhaps joining your hosts in preparing breakfast. Then join your local guide in the nearby city of Osijek, learning about its Roman and Ottoman history. Take free time to have lunch and explore the city center on your own, marveling at the architecture, museums, historic buildings, city parks, and monuments. This afternoon, find out how wine is made in this region – while enjoying a glass. Then, roll up your sleeves alongside locals to prepare traditional dishes and bread for dinner. (B, D)

Day 5: Tuesday, September 9, 2025 Karanac - Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina This morning, continue to Sarajevo – Bosnia and Herzegovina's capital city, where East meets West, and your home for the next two nights. Reminiscent of a European Jerusalem, experience a city shaped by its rich history and the coexistence of various religious sects. Perhaps you'll join a guided stroll this evening to get acquainted with the area. (B, L)

Day 6: Wednesday, September 10, 2025 Sarajevo With a local expert, uncover the history of Sarajevo, the starting point of the First World War. Meander the storied roadways and take in its blend of religions and architectural styles. Free time means independent exploration of this historic city. During an **Impact Moment**, meet with a local siege survivor, who will uncover more of Sarajevo's past. Spend time in the Sarajevo Tunnel Museum, the site of the "Tunnel of Hope" that connected the besieged city to the outside world. The rest of the afternoon is yours to explore Sarajevo on your own. Tonight, locals welcome you to their home for dinner. Enjoy regional favorites such as *klepe* (meat dumplings) and *burek* (flaky filled pastries). Sip Bosnian coffee as a soundtrack of traditional folk music sets the tone for a truly memorable evening. (B, D)

Day 7: Thursday, September 11, 2025 Sarajevo - Mostar - Dubrovnik, Croatia This morning, on your way to Croatia, spend time in Mostar, home to the iconic arched Stari Most Bridge (UNESCO). Explore Mostar on a guided walk before lunching on your own in the historic part of the city. This afternoon, be greeted by views of the Adriatic Sea when you arrive in Dubrovnik. (B)

Day 8: Friday, September 12, 2025 Dubrovnik Dubrovnik's ancient streets share their history and timeless appeal during a tour of the city. Then, let the city continue to reveal itself to you because **it's your choice!** Take a harbor cruise for magnificent views of Dubrovnik's medieval city walls and visit Lokrum Island - **OR**- get a bird's-eye view of the city by cable car, riding up to Srd Hill, a breathtaking vantage point to look over the Old Town below and the Adriatic Sea. With the remainder of your day free, you do you – Croatia-style. (B)



Book Now
& Save
\$100
Per Person

Book Now & Save \$100 Per Person:

Double ~~\$7,099~~; **Double \$6,999***
Single ~~\$7,899~~ **Single \$7,799**

For bookings made after Feb 06, 2025 call for rates.

Included in Price: Round Trip Air from Sky Harbor Intl Airport, Air Taxes and Fees/Surcharges, Hotel Transfers

Not included in price: Cancellation Waiver and Insurance of \$549 per person

* All Rates are Per Person and are subject to change, based on air inclusive package from PHX

Upgrade your in-flight experience with Elite Airfare

Additional rate of: Premium Economy \$2,290; Business Class \$4,690

• * Elite Air pricing (Premium Economy, Business Class or First class) is valid until 8 months prior to departure, after which rates are subject to change and will be quoted based upon availability.

† Refer to the reservation form to choose your upgrade option

IMPORTANT CONDITIONS: Your price is guaranteed once deposit is received and booking confirmed by Collette. Your price is not subject to increase after the deposit is received and booking confirmed, except for charges resulting from increases in government-imposed taxes or fees. **(See registration form for consent.)**

Day 9: Saturday, September 13, 2025 Dubrovnik - Kotor, Montenegro It's "Dovidenja" to Croatia as you head to Montenegro. Set sail on a private boat* for the islet of Our Lady of the Rocks. Visit the church before coasting through the breathtaking Kotor Bay towards the Old Town of Kotor (UNESCO). Complete your visit to Kotor with a locally guided tour before you settle in your hotel located within the historic walls of Kotor town. (B, D)

Day 10: Sunday, September 14, 2025 Kotor Today, have fun exploring Kotor your way. Perhaps you'll go on an optional excursion to Njeguši, a quiet and peaceful village located on the slope of Mount Lovcen about 900 meters above sea level. Soak in the views from a cable car and get a tasty local lesson on the traditions of prosciutto and homemade cheeses famously produced here – and, of course, sample these specialties. Learn more about Montenegrin history while visiting the royal town of Cetinje. Upon return, the remainder of the day is yours to explore the hidden corners of Kotor. (B)

Day 11: Monday, September 15, 2025 Kotor - Shkodër, Albania - Tirana Cross another border today and arrive in Albania! Get to know Shkodër, one of the most historic cities in the country. Admire mosques and churches on a guided stroll along the main pedestrian street and try some of the local cuisine. Continue your travel day on your way to Tirana, the capital city of Albania. Explore its history and architecture on a locally guided tour while learning more about Albania's intriguing past. Visit a former top-secret nuclear bunker, now a museum dedicated to the victims of one of the most controlling communist regimes in Europe. (B)

Day 12: Tuesday, September 16, 2025 Tirana Today, explore Tirana as you wish. Perhaps you'll decide to join an optional excursion to

the coastal ancient city of Durrës, where the Roman Amphitheater of Emperor Hadrian stands as the city's most prominent attraction. Join a local guide to see the historic city's ruins, and later, get an introduction to the viticulture in the region while enjoying a wine tasting paired with local specialties at a prominent winery. No matter how you fill your day, experience the best of the local cuisine and a show of rich folk traditions during dinner at a local restaurant. (B, D)

Day 13: Wednesday, September 17, 2025 Tirana - Gjirokastra - Kalambaka, Greece Soak in the beauty of the countryside with its winding roads and stretches of green on your way to Gjirokastra in southern Albania. Perhaps one of the steepest cities in the world, explore its unique architecture and glorious history. After having some free time in this fascinating town join your local guide on a tour of Gjirokastra's dominant castle on the hill. Cross into Greece, your last border on this travel journey. Arrive in Kalambaka** in the late afternoon in time to freshen up for dinner at the hotel. (B, D)

Day 14: Thursday, September 18, 2025 Kalambaka - Metéora - Athens This morning, explore Metéora. Visit one of the remote monasteries*** situated in a unique landscape, where limestone rock "towers" extend nearly 900 feet into the air. Over 600 years ago, Byzantine monks built their monastic community perched atop these rocks. Later, learn how Byzantine icons are created by visiting an icon-painting workshop in Kalambaka. Watch some of the process at this atelier, where icons are made using traditional methods. Spend some time on your own in this enchanting town before continuing your journey to Athens. (B)

Day 15: Friday, September 19, 2025 Athens Later this morning explore the sights of Athens on a locally-guided walking tour.

For more information visit <https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1318921>

From Syntagma Square and the Monument to the Unknown Soldier, wander through the streets, soaking in the essence of this iconic city and savoring its charm and energy. Visit the new Acropolis Museum, considered one of the most important museums in the world, to trace the story of the ancient city. Located within a short walking distance of the Acropolis, the museum houses archeological treasures from the Acropolis and offers wonderful views on the ancient site. The rest of the day is yours to explore more of Athens on your own before joining your fellow travelers for dinner and to toast to the end of your journey. (B, D)

Day 16: Saturday, September 20, 2025 Athens - Tour Ends Your tour ends today. (B)

Important Tour Information:

Book Now rates valid until Feb 06, 2025, valid on air inclusive packages only.

The overall activity level of this tour is a level 3. This means you're an on-the-go traveler. You don't want to miss a thing, so walking and standing for longer periods of time (2-3 hours) isn't a big deal. A moderately paced two-and-a-half-hour walking tour, covering several miles, hills, and uneven surfaces, is no problem for you. Walking four miles over the course of a day is very doable, as is climbing into and out of various modes of transportation (tuk-tuk, cable car, zodiac, etc.). You can climb three flights of stairs easily and handle altitudes between 6,000 and 9,000 feet. Expect some longer days with early mornings or late nights balanced with free time to recharge or set out on your own adventure. This level is not a fit for travelers who require mobility assistance devices.

Travel with an average of 16 people (maximum of 24).

The visit of the monastery at Meteora requires you to climb approximately 140 steps.

Sailing Boka Bay requires you to use a non-stationary gangway that requires some agility.

If you choose to walk the Dubrovnik city walls, expect climbs up to 50 steps at time, sudden changes of elevation, and limited shade.

If you require any special assistance while on tour, please make us aware at time of reservation so the necessary request form can be sent to your attention.

In Dubrovnik, you may expect some uneven and slippery pavement and steep, narrow side streets.

This tour includes three days with long transfers of 8+ hours, broken up by visits to cities and time for lunch.

The days and order of sightseeing may change to best utilize your time on tour.

*The boat tour to Our Lady of the Rocks and Kotor is weather dependent. In the case of bad weather, the sailing schedule may be cancelled.

***At the monastery, women are required to wear long skirts and have their shoulders covered; men are required to wear long pants.

Dubrovnik Old Town can be crowded during the months of June, July, and August.

Single accommodations are limited and are available on a first come, first served basis. Single rate subject to change based on availability. Triple rooms are not available.

Coaches which may not be lavatory equipped may be used on this tour. In this case, stops are made during travel periods.

To complete your tour, we include roundtrip airport-to-hotel transfers when purchasing our airfare with your tour. If you have arranged for your own air, we are pleased to provide you the option of *purchasing* these transfers. Please note that all transfers will leave at pre-scheduled times.

For air-inclusive reservations, the name provided at time of booking must match your government-issued ID that will be used during travel. Name changes are subject to penalties.

Air passengers will arrive into Zagreb, Croatia and depart from Athens, Greece.

Please be advised many airlines do not provide advance seat assignments until check-in at the airport. Advance seating will be subject to the airline's terms and conditions.

Economy air rate and schedule are applicable for groups of 10 or more traveling on the same flights and dates.

Travel Requirements:

IDENTIFICATION

Passports are required for this tour at your expense. Certain countries require that your passport be valid at least 6 months beyond the dates of your travel. You are strongly urged to contact the appropriate consulate for details. Visit www.travel.state.gov for the U.S. State Department for the latest details about passports and visa requirements.

IMPORTANT: We recommend that travelers take a photocopy of their passport and applicable visas. It should be packed separately from your actual passport and visa. We also recommend leaving a copy at home with your emergency contact.

Please note the border-crossings. Travelers should keep their passports handy.

Effective for travel in May 2025, all visitors who do not need a visa to enter Europe will be expected to apply for an ETIAS visa waiver, for a fee, when visiting a Schengen Area Country. To identify Schengen Area Countries and to complete the ETIAS application, please visit <https://www.etiasvisa.com/>

A deposit of \$698 per person is due upon reservation. Reservations are made on a first come, first served basis. Reservations made after the seat reduction date of January 30, 2025 are based upon availability. Final payment due by June 07, 2025. Deposits are refundable up until February 06, 2025.

CST#2006766-20 UBN#601220855 Nevada Sellers of Travel Registration No. 2003-0279

**For important reservation information visit
<https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1318921>.
You can also find this information on your tour documents.**