

MONTENEGRO

In search of lost time



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parallel zero



Tourists visit the tomb of Petar Petrović Njegoš's, the country's spiritual guide and the author of *The Mountain Wreath*, Montenegro's most famous epic poem. The Mausoleum, at the summit of Jezerski Vrh, was constructed in 1971. The location for his burial place was chosen by Njegoš himself as his last wish. Mount Lovćen was the inspiration for the name Montenegro (Crna Gora / Black Mountain), first mentioned in a charter issued by Stefan Milutin in 1276. The name derives from Mount Lovćen's appearance as it is covered in dark dense forests.

- ▶ After the breakup of Yugoslavia in 1992, Montenegro remained part of a smaller federal republic along with Serbia
- ▶ In 2006, the Parliament declared independence. The new republic of Montenegro was recognised by Serbia, the EU and the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council
- ▶ During the past 14 years, the country has been searching for a balance between modernization and continuity with its roots
- ▶ Montenegro formally became a member of NATO in 2017. This triggered a threat of retaliatory actions from Russia
- ▶ Since 2012 the country has been in negotiations to join the EU. In 2018, the earlier goal of acceding by 2022 was revised to 2025



Podgorica, students play football in front of a mural of Petar II Petrović-Njegoš, considered the “father” of modern Montenegro. The figure of Njegoš (and his work) has been reinterpreted for more than a century, according to the needs of the time and the government in power. While the Serbian monarchy needed Njegoš to be a putative father of Greater Serbia at the beginning of the 20th century, the communist regime of Titoš made Njegoš a promoter of pan-Slavism and solidarity among the peoples of the Balkans, a concept at the root of the Yugoslav idea.



A child dries himself by the Morača River, the largest river in the city of Podgorica, the capital of Montenegro. Podgorica was previously known as Titograd, between 1946 and 1992 when Montenegro was part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.



The swimming pool of the Regent Hotel in Porto Montenegro, Tivat, on the Montenegro coastline. These luxury residences are priced at between 6 to 12 thousand euros per square meter. Porto Montenegro is the main luxury village of the Bay of Kotor; it was funded by a Canadian millionaire following the country's independence and it has been sold to the Investment Corporation of Dubai for an estimated 200 million euros.

A country in the process of re-inventing itself

A tiny nation squashed between the mountain and the sea. The ex-Yugoslavia times, and a political legacy hard to erase. The years of economic sanctions and trade embargo. The bankruptcy of the state. The long and ill-fated alliance with Serbia. Finally, in 2006, the declaration of independence. Montenegro is one of the youngest countries in the European continent, and for the past 14 years it has been striving to walk with its own legs.

During these years, the country has been searching for a balance between modernization and continuity with its roots, struggling to relieve the tensions between Western models and communist legacies, between the aspirations of the youth and the rituals of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

In 2006 Montenegro unilaterally decided to adopt the Euro as official currency. The government declared that its strategic goal was to join the European Union and NATO. The country was re-imagined as a laboratory of transition from one paradigm to another, in the most fluid and efficient way possible, through foreign investments, social and human rights reforms and development plans.

Montenegro joined NATO in 2017. As the country pushes towards EU membership by 2025, a significant part of the population still considers this process a betraying of the historical relationship with Serbia and an unacceptable abruptness from the Russian influence. It is unclear whether the European integration process corresponds to a genuine desire felt by the people, or it is just the artificial product of the aspirations of a single man, Milo Đukanović, who has been in power for over thirty years, alternatively as President and Prime Minister.



The Monument to the Heroes and Partisans of the Second World War in Žabljak, commemorating the anti-Nazi resistance during the Second World War.



John M. Barac, 23, is a representative of the LGBT association Progress. According to John, there are just a couple of bars in the city of Podgorica where he feels safe as a gay man. As part of the EU membership process, the Parliament of Montenegro has to adopt a law giving legal status to same sex relationships.



Teenaged cheerleaders from Tivat rehearse on the waterfront. In the central part of Montenegro's Bay of Kotor, Tivat hosts Porto Montenegro, a luxury Village that attracts tourists mainly from Russia, USA and Germany. Even though the village is open (no walls and barriers), the prices of its products and services are so high that the majority of the local population feels excluded from Porto Montenegro.



On the beach in Sutomore, a towel with the symbol of Independent Montenegro. The official flag includes symbols connoting the power of the Orthodox Church, a feature that is contested by the Muslim minorities living in the country. The design of the Montenegrin coat of arms is inspired by that of the Russian Empire, with which the House of Petrović-Njegoš had close dynastic and political ties during the 19th century when the coat of arms was first adopted in its present form.



The studio of the Vijesti TV news programme, Montenegro's most popular news broadcast. Various journalists from Vjesti's newspaper edition have suffered injuries, assaults and shootings. The paper's editorial policy was initially very much in favour of Milo Đukanović and his government's policies and relations with Serbia. However, this editorial policy changed after the 2006 Montenegrin independence referendum when Vijesti became Đukanović's main critic.



A child looks out from the ferry from Bari (Italy) to Bar (Montenegro).



A tourist holds the Montenegrin flag at the mausoleum of Petar Petrović Njegoš, who is considered the country's spiritual guide and is the author of "The Mountain Wreath", the most important Montenegrin epic poem. The flag was officially adopted in 2004 (two years before independence from Serbia). It was sanctioned with the proclamation of the Constitution on 22 October 2007. This version has been criticised by the opposition, because it eliminates the tricolour (similar to the Serbian flag), present in the version Montenegro used between 1905 and 1918.



A youth water polo team trains at an open-air swimming pool in Kotor, a coastal town in Montenegro. Water polo is one of Montenegro's most popular sports.



A traditional cafe inside the closed market of Podgorica.



Dusan Tomic takes part in a beard competition, organised inside a mall in Podgorica. Dusan, who works as graphic designer, loves wearing Montenegrin traditional costume.



A bus in transit through Sutomore on the main coastal road in Montenegro, which connects the country with Albania to the south and Croatia to the north. Sutomore is a popular tourist destination in Montenegro, mostly frequented by families and groups of young people from the Balkans.



The showers in the beach in Sutomore, a popular tourist destination in Montenegro, mostly frequented by families and groups of young people from the Balkans.



People take a break in Mojkovac, Northern Montenegro.



Andela (28), Director of the Kolašin 1450 ski resort, one of the most important ski resorts in Montenegro and the Balkans. Andela studied Marketing, Trade and Operational Strategy at the University of Belgrade (Serbia). After having dealt with some prejudice concerning her young age, she now feels accepted and respected in a predominantly male working environment.



Members of a choir in Kolasin dressed in traditional clothes after performing for a local television station to promote the Kolašin 1450 ski resort, one of the most important ski resorts in Montenegro and the Balkans. According to the Privatisation Plan 2018, the Government is planning a long-term lease of 271,990 m² of land to create the new ski resort Kolasin 1600, which is set to become the backbone of the country's winter tourism infrastructure. A German company has already expressed interest in the project.



A house is used to store equipment for rafting tours on the Tara Canyon. The Canyon, located inside the Durmitor Park in Northern Montenegro, attracts thousands of tourists each year, contributing to the development of an economically depressed area.



Two strangers dance the tango during a course organized in the centre of Podgorica.



Tourists explore the fortifications of Kotor, a coastal town in Montenegro. In 2016 it was added to Lonely Planet's list of the top ten places to visit.



Montenegrin children play in the Morača River, the largest river in the city of Podgorica, the capital of Montenegro. Podgorica was previously known as Titograd, between 1946 and 1992 when Montenegro was part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.



A group of so-called Yugo-nostalgics participate in the celebration of the 'Day of Youth', which was celebrated on 25 May in socialist Yugoslavia on the birthday of the former president for life: Josip Broz Tito. The celebration is organised in Virpazar, a village and tourist destination on Lake Skadar that was the site of a famous early insurgency against fascist forces in Europe. For 25 May, the group plans to drive to the city of Belgrade, in Serbia, where Tito is interred in a Mausoleum.

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