

Budva

Beneath the wooded ridges of mighty Lovcen, rising precipitously from the sea, nature has contrived a multitude of delights: Budva, an ancient beauty wrapped in the splendid robes of its white walls, embracing and giving shelter from the buffeting winds to a string of small picturesque towns: Sveti Stefan, Milocer and Petrovac.

Also delightful on the Budva Riviera are about forty villages and hamlets and twenty beaches that twist and wind along the sea coast. This incredible place with its luxuriant Mediterranean vegetation, seemingly endless sunny days, the gradually deepening sea bed and sandy beaches, offers excellent opportunities for all kinds of development. Located on the coast and washed by a crystal-clear sea, in the immediate vicinity of Budva, is Sveti Stefan, a small settlement converted uniquely into a hotel. As if rising from the sea, elegantly displaying all its charms, Sveti Stefan is a marvelous little place, joining in a most unusual way past and present. Its close-packed, block-like houses offer an archaic ambience, evoking the romance of another age, while the splendour and luxury of the interior of these same sleepy houses can provide the most exciting night life on the Adriatic, while satisfying the standards of an upscale clientele.

Nestling in dense vegetation so generously endowed by nature is the pretty town of Petrovac, almost jealously hiding its beauty, visible only through tall cypress and thick olive trees. A special attraction of the town is the wonderfully white beach where nature has scattered its finest sand.

The most singular attraction of the region, however, is the old-new town of Budva, also the centre of the Riviera. It attracts with modern beauty but also with a glorious, eventful past; it has the patina that always covers whatever is exceptionally valuable and yet as soon as one scratches beneath the patina, it can be seen that although this beauty is aged, it is still attractive, that its origins are centuries-old, evidence of this found in numerous written documents, legends, buildings of cultural and historical interest, ruins and excavations.

Budva remembers antiquity, from prehistoric through Illyrian and Roman times, the Middle Ages until the present day, traces seen in graves, the remains of basilicas, mosaics, ramparts, fortifications, religious buildings.

On the basis of their diggings archaeologists have discovered that the city goes back two and a half millennia. Not surprisingly, over the centuries this beauty was the goal of various conquerors. It would be difficult to count all who seized and enslaved the city. Budva resisted all attackers, the people of the region fighting fiercely against them for centuries, writing glorious pages in their history down until the most recent times when they opposed the powerful fascist occupiers during the Second World War, making enormous sacrifices.

Following the war came a difficult period of rebuilding what had been destroyed. It was a time of enthusiasm and spirit, a time when a free country was being built with love. The years passed, and various problems arose, leading to social stratification and divisions. It was necessary to resolve numerous problems, causing dissatisfaction among the people, especially in the late 1980s, when a movement was born in Montenegro that resulted in a change in the existing authorities. People sought a return to their historical being, as the foundations on which modern relations in society should be built. Democratic institutions and multi-party parliamentarism were developed, and many changes were made conducive to the expression of creativity, knowledge and ability. A new day had dawned bringing transformation and renewal, and a bold course was charted towards the values underlying modern democratic processes and civilization.

In the last few decades the town of Budva began to acquire new contours and lines. With the new era, around the nucleus of the new town, modern buildings sprang up, the city spreading with fine hotels and landscaped housing estates.

Thus, incredibly Budva has brought together two worlds: the old, rather sleepy, nestling in a venerable past, and the new, which with head erect marches towards the latest achievements of civilization. These two worlds complement one another, interwoven, each retaining all its charms and beauty, thereby creating a unique entity where somehow the old becomes new, and the new, old. Lost is the fluctuating boundary between the ancient city of Budva and Budva as a mondaine centre of the Adriatic, between the impressive walls of past centuries and a modern town comparable with many stone habitats springing up along the coasts of the world.

There are few cities where the architecture of the old and new blends so charmingly, creating a harmonious whole. Here in one place you will appreciate the spirit of the old town where you can feel the breath of the past and the new part of the town, proudly rising on the site of an illustrious past, offering beauty and all kinds of opportunities for entertainment and a wide range of cultural events.

In Budva you cannot help taking an interest in the values and treasures of this city, a place where a person can rest but also find spiritual inspiration. Every single corner offers opportunities for the development of cultural events, every level space is a natural stage where at any moment you can see a fine theatre performance, hear a pleasant melody. Nowhere will you experience so much enthusiasm after seeing a performance or listening to a song, so naturally do they blend into the ambience. Nowhere are there such beautiful open-air stages, reflecting the spirit of the region, nowhere such lovely sounds of song, echoing from the hills and like a star plunging into the waves.

And nature has undertaken, like a devoted mother, to carve this region into unusual forms, painted with the purest colours and nuances. With its warm, soft tones, the setting resembles some ancient Biblical land, beautiful, peaceful, awakening great creative energy.

Not a pen or brush can resist this challenge. Many artists have therefore visited Budva, Milocer, Sveti Stefan and Petrovac, spending time in the region, creating works worthy of world treasuries of art.

And the people of this region, together with their homeland, have experienced a considerable cultural transformation. In times long past, as peasants and fishermen doing heavy labour and wresting little from the land and the sea, people lived modestly, yet proudly, aware of the beauty and glory of their homeland. People from this region have always been drawn to various parts of the world, but they always returned, bringing new ideas. Because of the frequent shifting of the population, which dates from the earliest times, the region has experienced a singular transformation. From their modest way of life, these gentle people have sailed boldly for the boundless shores of opportunity that modern civilization offers and irresistibly attracts everyone with an innate sense of beauty.

Beauty has always had a high price, and over the centuries Budva paid highly. Innumerable times in its long history, it was despoiled and ravaged by tyrants and oppressors, and on several occasions by the devastating forces of nature, as if jealous of having bestowed so much beauty. Tirelessly, Budva has persevered, proudly quarding its foundations, forged in another age, rising again even more beautiful. Celebrated by an eventful past, decorated with rare beauty, Budva will welcome a host of visitors, both unknown and world-famous. And it will continue to endure for centuries, proudly challenging the ravages of time, its time-worn walls bathed in the glistening foam of the sea, so mighty and so irresistible.