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## Chapter 1 Profile

### Introduction

Throughout the centuries, the Serbs have experienced strong affiliation as well as intense conflict with ethnic groups that share their cultural roots in the region. In the early 20th century, the Serbs joined with other ethnic groups to form the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. When Yugoslavia later dissolved, the constituent states were divided by ethnic and religious differences. Serbia, dominant among the emerging states, has experienced continuing inter-ethnic conflict and reshaping of its political boundaries up to the present century.<sup>1</sup> An uneasy peace has existed between ethnic groups in the region since the end of the Bosnian war in 1995, and the independence of Montenegro (2006) and Kosovo (2008).<sup>2, 3, 4</sup> Although the Serbs share certain cultural roots with other peoples in the area, they are separated by historical experience, religious beliefs, and linguistic differences.<sup>5</sup>



© whl.travel / flickr.com  
Victor Monument

### Geography

Serbia, which became a separate nation in 2006, is located on southeastern Europe's Balkan Peninsula. It was formerly known as the state union of Serbia and Montenegro, and before that, Serbia was a republic of the Yugoslav Socialist Federal Republic.<sup>6, 7</sup> Eight countries surround Serbia, some of which were part of the former Yugoslavia, but have recently declared their independence.



© Jordan Sitkin  
Serbia-Bulgaria border  
© Jordan Sitkin  
Serbia-Bulgaria border

<sup>1</sup> James Mayfield, "Evolving Ethnic & Religious History of the Serbs, Croats, & Bosnians," European Heritage Library, 2008, <http://euroheritage.net/serbscroatsbosnians.shtml>

<sup>2</sup> Dan Bilefsky, "Bosnia Serbs and Envoy Are at Odds on Powers," *New York Times*, 19 June 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/20/world/europe/20bosnia.html>

<sup>3</sup> Neil MacFarquhar, "Serbia Wins Bid to Review Independence of Kosovo," *New York Times*, 8 October 2008, [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/09/world/europe/09nations.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/09/world/europe/09nations.html?_r=1)

<sup>4</sup> Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Serbia: Profile—Foreign Relations," 29 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5388.htm>

<sup>5</sup> Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations, "Serbia—Land and People," Encyclopedia.com, 2011, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Serbia.aspx>

<sup>6</sup> HowStuffWorks, Discovery Communications, "Geography of Serbia," 2011, <http://geography.howstuffworks.com/europe/geography-of-serbia-and-montenegro.htm>

<sup>7</sup> Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations, "Serbia," Encyclopedia.com, 2011, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Serbia.aspx>

Covering an area of 77,474 sq km (29,913 sq mi), Serbia is almost as large as the U.S. state of Maine or South Carolina.<sup>8,9</sup> Three countries lie along Serbia's western side: Bosnia and Herzegovina, (due west, bordering 302 km/187 mi of Serbia); Montenegro (southwest, bordering 124 km/77 mi); and Croatia (northwest, bordering 241 km/150 mi). Sharing Serbia's southern border are Kosovo (bordering 352 km/219 mi) and Macedonia (bordering 62 km/38 mi). Bulgaria adjoins Serbia's southeastern side (bordering 318 km/197 mi) and Romania lies north of Bulgaria, along Serbia's central and northeastern side (bordering 476 km/296 mi). Hungary is situated directly north of Serbia (bordering 151 km/94 mi).<sup>10</sup>

## Geographic Divisions and Topographic Features

Serbia is part of the Balkan Peninsula, a mountainous region between the Adriatic Sea on the west and the Black Sea on the east. The northern part of Serbia is covered with large, fertile plains. Mountains cut through the remainder of the country, divided into eastern and western ranges by the Morava River.<sup>11, 12, 13</sup>

### *Northern Plains*

The northern plains, a relatively flat area that spreads across northern Serbia's Vojvodina province, consist of rich soils nourished by rivers that traverse the area.<sup>14</sup> The plains extend from the area around Belgrade to the borders of Romania, Hungary, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, merging into the Great Hungarian Plain that lies to the north of Serbia. The Pannonian Plain rises into hills south of Belgrade (and the Sava and Danube rivers), soon merging into the mountains that crowd through the remainder of the country.<sup>15, 16</sup>



© Miroslav Zadrepko  
Fertile Northern Plains

<sup>8</sup> Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Serbia: Profile—Geography," 29 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5388.htm>

<sup>9</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, "Serbia—Geography," in *The World Factbook*, 18 April 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ri.html>

<sup>10</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, "Serbia—Geography," in *The World Factbook*, 18 April 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ri.html>

<sup>11</sup> Maps of World.com, "Serbia Geography," 2009, <http://www.mapsofworld.com/serbia/geography-and-history/geography.html>

<sup>12</sup> WorldAtlas.com, "The Balkan Peninsula, or (the Balkans)," n.d., <http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/europe/balkans.htm>

<sup>13</sup> HowStuffWorks, Discovery Communications, "Geography of Serbia," 2011, <http://geography.howstuffworks.com/europe/geography-of-serbia-and-montenegro.htm>

<sup>14</sup> Laurence Mitchell, "Two Communities in Banat," *Hidden Europe*, 5 March 2007, [http://www.hidden europe.co.uk/article\\_info.php?articles\\_id=312](http://www.hidden europe.co.uk/article_info.php?articles_id=312)

<sup>15</sup> Jane's, "Geography (Serbia), Geography—Physical Overview," 23 October 2009, <http://www.janes.com/extracts/extract/balksu/yugos030.html>

<sup>16</sup> Maps of World.com, "Serbia Geography," 2009, <http://www.mapsofworld.com/serbia/geography-and-history/geography.html>

### *Western Mountains*

Extending through Serbia from northwest to southeast on the west side of the Morava River are the Dinaric Alps. A large mountain chain composed of several smaller ranges, the Dinaric Alps run parallel to the Adriatic coastline.<sup>17</sup> The Kopaonik range extends along Serbia's rocky southwestern border with Kosovo.<sup>18, 19, 20</sup>



© Magnus Manske  
Dinaric Alps in Western Serbia

The entire stretch of mountains in Serbia's west has made much of the region inaccessible.

Throughout history, this rugged geography has limited the scope of invasions, migrations, and settlements (which still tend to be sparse). The Dinaric Alps and their associated ranges lie at the crossroads of what were the Eastern (Byzantine) and Western Roman Empires, giving rise to many cultures.<sup>21</sup>

### *Eastern Mountains*

Covering Serbia's eastern territory are limestone basins and mountain ranges. To the southeast, ancient mountains and hills run parallel to the eastern bank of the Morava River.<sup>22</sup> These are the Balkan Mountains, which form a natural border between Serbia and the nations to the east—Romania and Bulgaria.<sup>23, 24</sup> The Balkan Mountains arc from east to west in Bulgaria, curving into the eastern side of Serbia. At their northern end, the Balkans merge into the Carpathian Mountains, which extend north into Romania and then curve to the west.<sup>25</sup>



© Evengi Karalamov / flickr.com  
Balkan Mountains

<sup>17</sup> Summitpost.org, "Dinaric Alps," 14 November 2010,

<http://www.summitpost.org/area/range/155326/dinaric-alps.html>

<sup>18</sup> Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations, "Serbia," Encyclopedia.com, 2011,

<http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Serbia.aspx>

<sup>19</sup> Maps of World.com, "Serbia Geography," 2009, <http://www.mapsofworld.com/serbia/geography-and-history/geography.html>

<sup>20</sup> Jane's, "Geography (Serbia), Geography—Physical Overview," 23 October 2009,

<http://www.janes.com/extracts/extract/balksu/yugos030.html>

<sup>21</sup> Summitpost.org, "Dinaric Alps, Map 2: The Physical Map of the Dinaric Alps and Position on the Map of Europe," 14 November 2010, <http://www.summitpost.org/area/range/155326/dinaric-alps.html>

<sup>22</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, "Serbia: Geography: Terrain," in *The World Factbook*, 28 April 2011,

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ri.html>

<sup>23</sup> Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations, "Serbia," Encyclopedia.com, 2011,

<http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Serbia.aspx>

<sup>24</sup> Maps of World.com, "Serbia Geography," 2009, <http://www.mapsofworld.com/serbia/geography-and-history/geography.html>

<sup>25</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Balkan Mountains," 2011,

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/50290/Balkan-Mountains>

## Climate

Serbia is landlocked. As a result, warm air masses from the Mediterranean cannot moderate the country's weather extremes. Cold air from northern and eastern Europe affects the climate year-round. In northern Serbia, where a continental climate prevails, winters are extremely arid and cold.<sup>26</sup> Freezing winds, known as *košava*, often sweep through the Carpathian Mountains in a southeasterly direction into Serbia. In winter, these squalls spread westward across the Serbian plains.<sup>27</sup> In contrast, summers on the plains can be hot and dry, with temperatures averaging 22° C (71° F), and reaching as high as 38° C (100° F). The summer air is more humid in other areas of the north. In January, the average temperatures in the north are around -1° C (30° F). Central Serbia enjoys a continental climate. In Belgrade, located on the Pannonian Plain's southern rim, the average temperature in January is 0° C (32° F). July is warmer, with an average temperature of 23° C (73° F).<sup>28</sup>



© Nikola B / flickr.com  
Winter in Serbia

In the mountain regions, the winter season is extremely cold, and usually marked by heavy snowfall. In early summer, heavy rains are common. Summer temperatures in the mountains are cooler than in the rest of the country, averaging 18° C (64° F).<sup>29, 30</sup>

The amount of rainfall throughout Serbia depends on elevation and the extent of exposure of the terrain. It varies yearly, measuring 560–1,900 mm (22–75 in). The country's lowest yearly rainfall occurs in the northern plains region. In general, most rain falls during late spring, summer, and late autumn. In winter, most of the country's precipitation is in the form of snow.<sup>31, 32</sup>

## Rivers

### *Danube*

The Danube River is Serbia's longest and its main drainage river. It flows south into Serbia from Hungary and traces much of Serbia's western border with Croatia before turning southeast onto Serbia's Pannonian Plain. Several rivers join it as it winds through the country. On Serbia's eastern side, the Danube River follows the Serbian-Romanian

<sup>26</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Serbia–Land–Climate," 2011, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-92892>

<sup>27</sup> J. Küttner. "Der Kosava in Serbien." *Meteor. Z.* 57, (1940): 120–123,

<http://ams.glossary.allenpress.com/glossary/browse?s=k&p=11>

<sup>28</sup> HowStuffWorks, Discovery Communications, "Geography of Serbia," 2011,

<http://geography.howstuffworks.com/europe/geography-of-serbia-and-montenegro.htm>

<sup>29</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Serbia–Land–Climate," 2011, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-92892>

<sup>30</sup> HowStuffWorks, Discovery Communications, "Geography of Serbia," 2011,

<http://geography.howstuffworks.com/europe/geography-of-serbia-and-montenegro.htm>

<sup>31</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Serbia–Land–Climate," 2011, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-92892>

<sup>32</sup> HowStuffWorks, Discovery Communications, "Geography of Serbia," 2011,

<http://geography.howstuffworks.com/europe/geography-of-serbia-and-montenegro.htm>

border southeast and then departs Serbia, continuing southeast as the border between Romania and Bulgaria.<sup>33</sup> Where the Danube River runs between Serbia and Romania, the Iron Gate Dam and power plant provides energy to both countries.<sup>34</sup> Eventually, the Danube empties into the Black Sea.<sup>35</sup>



© Jeremy Ladan  
Danube River in Novi Sad

### *Tisza*

Also flowing south from Hungary, the Tisza River enters Serbia in the northern Vojvodina region.<sup>36</sup> Here it becomes a major tributary of the Danube, merging into it by a canal 45 km (28 mi) north of Belgrade. The confluence of high water in the Danube and the Tisza rivers causes the Tisza to flow back on itself and flood the countryside. Many levees have been built along its banks to control this natural event.<sup>37</sup>

### *Sava*

The Sava River, navigable for small freight ships, enters Serbia from Bosnia and Herzegovina in the west.<sup>38</sup> One of the Danube's prominent western tributaries, it flows east to merge with the great river at Belgrade. The Sava River has a number of tributaries.



© Brian King  
Sava River

### *Drina*

One of the Sava's tributaries is the Drina River. It originates where the Piva and Tara rivers meet in Montenegro and flows north for a distance of 346 km (215 mi), separating a large section of Serbia from Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Drina starts out as a series of rapids flowing through deep gorges and becomes less turbulent as it reaches the plain, where it finally merges into the eastward flowing Sava River.<sup>39</sup>



© Julijan Nyča  
Bridge on Drina River

<sup>33</sup> Radio Srbija, "Rivers and Bridges in Serbia, 13 February 2009, [http://www.glassrbije.org/E/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=6213&Itemid=28](http://www.glassrbije.org/E/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=6213&Itemid=28)

<sup>34</sup> HowStuffWorks, Discovery Communications, "Geography of Serbia," 2011, <http://geography.howstuffworks.com/europe/geography-of-serbia-and-montenegro.htm>

<sup>35</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Serbia: Land-Drainage," 2011, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-92891>

<sup>36</sup> Radio Srbija, "Rivers and Bridges in Serbia," 13 February 2009, [http://www.glassrbije.org/E/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=6213&Itemid=28](http://www.glassrbije.org/E/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=6213&Itemid=28)

<sup>37</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Tisza River," 2011, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9072634>

<sup>38</sup> Radio Srbija, "Rivers and Bridges in Serbia," 13 February 2009, [http://www.glassrbije.org/E/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=6213&Itemid=28](http://www.glassrbije.org/E/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=6213&Itemid=28)

<sup>39</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Drina River," 2011, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9031209>

## *Morava*

The Morava River flows through central Serbia's most fertile lands as well as its most populated region.<sup>40</sup> It drains two-fifths of Serbia's territory and is the largest river that lies entirely within Serbian boundaries. The Morava River begins in southern Serbia and flows north, merging into the Danube east of Belgrade.<sup>41</sup>



© Magalie L'Abbé  
Morava River at night

## **Major Cities**

### *Belgrade*

Located on the southern rim of the Pannonian Plains, Belgrade is Serbia's capital (formerly the capital of Yugoslavia) and its largest city. It lies at the meeting point of two navigable rivers, the Danube and the Sava, giving Belgrade two of its three historically important travel and trade routes. The third is to the southeast, through the Morava and Vardar River valleys. Belgrade is also Serbia's educational and cultural center, with museums, galleries, theaters, and institutions of higher learning.<sup>42</sup>



© m\_illuminato / flickr.com  
Serbia's capital, Belgrade

### *Novi Sad*

Lying on the banks of the Danube River, Novi Sad is the country's second largest city and capital of Vojvodina, Serbia's northern province. Although NATO air strikes destroyed parts of the city in the 1999 Kosovo intervention, many of the city's oldest museums, churches, and other cultural sites escaped the bombing. Novi Sad is now a tourist destination, as well as an industrial center, and the province's main commercial hub.<sup>43</sup>



© Jeremy Ladan  
Danube River, Novi Sad

<sup>40</sup> Infoplease, "Morava," 2011, <http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/world/A0833967.html>

<sup>41</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Morava River," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/391873/Morava-River>

<sup>42</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Belgrade," 2011, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9001552>

<sup>43</sup> J. Bartleby, "Novi Sad, Serbia: For Tourists," 31 January 2006, [http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/19471/novi\\_sad\\_serbia\\_for\\_tourists.html?cat=16](http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/19471/novi_sad_serbia_for_tourists.html?cat=16)

## Niš

Located on the Morava River, Niš is an important industrial city in southern Serbia and is also among the oldest cities in the Balkans. Besides being a hub for rail and surface transport, Niš commands two of the main routes between the Aegean Sea and central Europe. The city is a cultural center, home to the University of Niš, several museums, the National Theater, and several historical monuments. It was also the birthplace of Constantine the Great.<sup>44</sup>

## Kragujevac

Located on the banks of a tributary of the Morava River in central Serbia, Kragujevac is the Šumadija region's principal city. It was here that the Serbs first revolted against Turkish rule in the early 19th century. Between 1818 and 1841, Kragujevac was Serbia's capital, and the country's first newspaper was published here. Today, Kragujevac's local economy is driven by industrial and agricultural production. Its main industries are textiles, weapons, machinery, electrical products, and motor vehicles.<sup>45</sup>



© Slavoljub Radojevic  
View of Kragujevac

## Subotica

Subotica lies close to Serbia's northern border with Hungary, along the railway line between Belgrade and Budapest. The city is located within an agricultural district and is the marketing center for produce, including paprika, which is a regional specialty. Subotica is also an industrial center, manufacturing plastics and chemicals. In addition, it is an educational center, with schools that specialize in law, economics, and advanced vocational fields.<sup>46, 47</sup>



© Slavoljub Radojevic  
Downtown Subotica

<sup>44</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Niš," 2011, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9055915>

<sup>45</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Kragujevac," 2011, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9046185>

<sup>46</sup> Zofona, "Subotica," 2009, <http://zofona.com/subotica.html>

<sup>47</sup> Zofona, "Subotica," 2009, <http://zofona.com/subotica.html>

## History

### *Early History and Ottoman Rule*

In the 6th and 7th centuries, Serbian (Southern Slavic) culture began spreading west from the Carpathian Mountains into the Serbs' present homeland. The Serbian people converted to Christianity sometime in the 9th century.<sup>48</sup> During their early history, continual warfare marked relations between the Serbs and their neighbors, including the Greeks, Bulgarians, and Magyars.

A long period of empire building followed, with mixed outcomes for the Serbs. Although the first Serbian dynasty expanded early on, the rising Bulgarian empire overshadowed it. By the early 14th century, however, the Serbian dynasty became the most powerful in the Balkan Peninsula and its empire absorbed much of the region. In the mid-14th century, the Ottoman Turks began their conquest of the Serbs. At the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, the medieval Serbian empire collapsed as Turkish armies surrounded the remainder of the Byzantine Empire.<sup>49</sup> The famous battle has been a rallying cry for Serbian nationalists and other South Slavic peoples throughout the centuries that followed.<sup>50, 51</sup>



© Predrag\_bubalo / flickr.com  
Karadjordje, fighter of Ottoman

After defeat at the hands of the Turks, Serbia became a Turkish province. The Turks destroyed the Serbian nobility and distributed their lands to Turkish military leaders and the feudal aristocracy. Serbia's Christian peasants became virtual slaves within the Ottoman Empire, and the Serbian church came under control of a prominent, privileged class of Greeks who served the empire. The sultan ruled from Constantinople, extracting high taxes from his subjects to finance the Turkish court and military caste.<sup>52, 53</sup>

A slow process of assimilation into Turkish customs and the Islamic religion took place. Professional advancement was possible for Serbian subjects, provided they were willing to accept the Islamic faith. Unsuccessful uprisings against Turkish rule took place periodically.

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<sup>48</sup> Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations, "Serbia: History—Consolidation of a People," 2011, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Serbia.aspx>

<sup>49</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Kosovo, Battle of," 2011, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9046112>

<sup>50</sup> Thomas A. Emmert, "The Battle of Kosovo: Early Reports of Victory and Defeat," in *Kosovo: Legacy of a Medieval Battle Vol. 1*, Wayne Vuninich and Thomas Emmert, eds., (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), <http://www.deremilitari.org/resources/articles/emmert.htm>

<sup>51</sup> Anna Di Lellio, *The Battle of Kosovo 1389: An Albanian Epic* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2009), <http://www.medievalists.net/2009/07/06/the-battle-of-kosovo-1389-an-albanian-epic/>

<sup>52</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Serbia: History: The Ottoman Period: Life under the Turks," 2011, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-43573>

<sup>53</sup> Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations, "Serbia: History: Turkish Rule," 2011, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Serbia.aspx>

As the Ottoman Empire declined in the 17th and 18th centuries, the Serbs began to seek independence more actively. In 1804, they launched a rebellion that eventually freed the province of Belgrade from Turkish rule. Serbia's alliance with Russia and the 1829 Treaty of Adrianople established Serbia's initial autonomy as a Russian protectorate. After the Crimean War, Serbia came under the jurisdiction of the European powers in 1856, and gained formal independence at the Congress of Berlin in 1878.<sup>54</sup>

### *Modern History*

The Austro-Hungarian Empire annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908 and gained power in the Balkan Peninsula. Threatened by this action, the Serbs created the Balkan League, a political organization designed to consolidate their power and disrupt Austro-Hungarian and Turkish control among the Balkan Serbs.<sup>55</sup> In 1914, a Bosnian Serb assassinated Franz Ferdinand, Archduke of Austria, an action that sparked World War I.<sup>56</sup> The Austro-Hungarian Empire collapsed and Serbia became the dominant power in the new Balkan kingdom, which was renamed Yugoslavia in 1929. In 1945, Yugoslavia was reconstituted as a communist nation including six republics: Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, Macedonia, and Montenegro.<sup>57, 58</sup> It also included two autonomous Serbian provinces: Vojvodina and Kosovo.



DoD Image  
Slobodan Milosevic

Yugoslavia remained unified under the communist leadership of Josip Broz Tito and transformed from its agrarian roots into an industrialized economy. Tito's refusal to conform to Soviet bloc politics led to Yugoslavia's expulsion from the Soviet bloc in 1948.<sup>59</sup> By 1955, Tito had joined forces with India and Egypt to form the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). After Tito died in 1980, Yugoslavia began to fragment under nationalist pressures that led to the wars of independence.<sup>60, 61</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Serbia: History: The Ottoman Period: Life under the Turks," 2011, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-43573>

<sup>55</sup> Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations, "Serbia: History: Turkish Rule," 2011, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Serbia.aspx>

<sup>56</sup> Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations, "Serbia: History: Turkish Rule," 2011, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Serbia.aspx>

<sup>57</sup> BBC News, "Timeline: Break-Up of Yugoslavia," 22 May 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4997380.stm>

<sup>58</sup> Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Serbia: People and History," 29 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5388.htm>

<sup>59</sup> BBC News, "Timeline: Break-Up of Yugoslavia," 22 May 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4997380.stm>

<sup>60</sup> BBC News, "Timeline: Break-Up of Yugoslavia," 22 May 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4997380.stm>

<sup>61</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Serbia: People and History," 29 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5388.htm>

In the late 1980s, Slobodan Milošević, who had become head of Serbia's Communist Party in 1986, pushed for a "Greater Serbia."<sup>62</sup> Separatist movements emerged, with Slovenia and Croatia the first to declare their independence. They were followed by Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia. The Albanian-populated province of Kosovo began an armed resistance against Serbian rule in 1997. NATO forces responded to Milošević's long-term violent repression of Kosovo's civilian population in 1999. The United Nations (UN) also became involved in the civil and military presence. Milošević was later tried for genocide and crimes against humanity by the UN war crimes tribunal in The Hague. In 2006, he was discovered dead in his jail cell.<sup>63, 64</sup>

In 2003, the name of Yugoslavia was changed to Serbia and Montenegro.<sup>65</sup> Then in 2006, Montenegro declared its independence.<sup>66</sup> Kosovo announced its independence in 2008 and has been recognized as an independent nation by 65 countries, including the U.S. At least six European Union nations oppose Kosovo's independence. Russia is also opposed and will likely block Kosovo's membership in the United Nations.<sup>67</sup>

## Economy

For most of the region's history, Serbia's economy was agricultural. When Tito came to power, large-scale industrialization began.<sup>68</sup> Later, with the death of Tito (1980) and the tumultuous break up—"balkanization"—of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, the industrial sector was badly damaged. The economy further suffered not only from the imposition of UN economic sanctions (1992–1995), but also NATO airstrikes that damaged cities and national infrastructure.<sup>69, 70</sup>



© Philippe Le Moine  
Factory in Trstenik

Economic growth occurred after 2000 in the former Yugoslav republic of Serbia, particularly after the government instituted market reforms in preparation for joining the

<sup>62</sup> Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations, "Serbia: Serbia within Yugoslavia," 2011, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Serbia.aspx>

<sup>63</sup> Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Serbia: People and History," 29 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5388.htm>

<sup>64</sup> BBC News, "Timeline: Break-Up of Yugoslavia," 22 May 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4997380.stm>

<sup>65</sup> Matt Rosenberg, "Yugoslavia Disappear: Officially Changes Name to Serbia and Montenegro," 5 February 2003, <http://geography.about.com/library/weekly/aa020503a.htm>

<sup>66</sup> Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Serbia: People and History," 29 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5388.htm>

<sup>67</sup> Steven Woehrel, "Kosovo: Current Issues and U.S. Policy," Congressional Research Service, 12 April 2010, <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/142748.pdf>

<sup>68</sup> Rudolph Bicanic, *Economic Policy in Socialist Yugoslavia*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 72–73.

<sup>69</sup> European Rail Guide, "Serbia Economy," n.d., <http://www.europeanrailguide.com/countryguides/serbia/economy.html>

<sup>70</sup> Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations, "Serbia: Economy, History," 2011, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Serbia.aspx>

European Union.<sup>71</sup> It joined the World Bank and other economic institutions and successfully restructured or cancelled much of its debt. The country also liberalized its trade policies and privatized business enterprises. Since becoming an independent nation, economic problems have persisted, particularly in the area of unemployment. In 2010, Serbia's estimated unemployment rate was slightly over 19%. Nearly one in four Serbs still works for state owned businesses or in government. Although privatization was to have been completed in 2009, the global economic crisis made this an impossible task.<sup>72</sup> Public discontent over inflation and high unemployment have led to demonstrations.<sup>73</sup>

The industrial sector contributes approximately 22% to Serbia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In contrast, the services sector contributes the most significant percentage (over 65%) to GDP, although only an estimated 56% of the labor force is employed in that sector.<sup>74</sup> Serbia's main industries include manufacturing and production of sugar, paper and pulp, lead, and agricultural machinery. The sector also produces transportation, electrical, and communications equipment.

Serbia's agricultural sector currently contributes around 13% to the country's GDP. Yet, approximately 24% of the labor force is in agriculture.<sup>75, 76</sup> The country's richest agricultural land lies in the plains region of Vojvodina. Principal crops include maize (corn), wheat, sugar beets, sunflowers, flax, and hemp.<sup>77</sup>

Serbia possesses few mineral resources but substantial amounts of metallic ores including copper.<sup>78</sup> Fossil fuels are very limited. Most crude oil enters the country through a pipeline from a Croatian port on the Adriatic Sea. Natural gas is also imported, mostly from Russia. Though there are coal mines in eastern Serbia and to the southwest of Belgrade, the country's coal reserves are in short supply.<sup>79, 80</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> European Rail Guide, "Serbia Economy," n.d.,

<http://www.europeanrailguide.com/countryguides/serbia/economy.html>

<sup>72</sup> Global Edge, "Serbia: Economy," 2011, <http://globaledge.msu.edu/countries/serbia/economy/>

<sup>73</sup> Biljana Pekusic, "Serbia's Economy Caught in a Bind," SETimes, 7 February 2011,

[http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en\\_GB/features/setimes/features/2011/02/07/feature-02](http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2011/02/07/feature-02)

<sup>74</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, "Serbia: Economy," in *The World Factbook*, 28 April 2011,

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ri.html>

<sup>75</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, "Serbia: Economy," in *The World Factbook*, 28 April 2011,

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ri.html>

<sup>76</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Serbia: Economy," 2011, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-42933>

<sup>77</sup> Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations, "Serbia: Economy, History," 2011,

<http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Serbia.aspx>

<sup>78</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Serbia: Economy: Resources and Power: Natural Resources," 2011,

<http://search.eb.com/eb/article-228330>

<sup>79</sup> Jane's, "Natural Resources, Serbia," 2009, <http://www.janes.com/articles/Janes-Sentinel-Security-Assessment-The-Balkans/Natural-resources-Serbia.html>

<sup>80</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Serbia: Economy: Resources and Power: Energy," 2011,

<http://search.eb.com/eb/article-228330>

## Ethnic Groups

The primary ethnic groups in Serbia are Serb (88%), Hungarian (4%), Bosniak (2%), and Romany (1%). Relatively few identify as Yugoslav, Montenegrin, Croat, and others.<sup>81, 82</sup> Ethnic strife combined with political discord in Serbia, formerly part of Yugoslavia, reached epic proportions in the late 20th and early 21st century. It led to the fragmentation of Yugoslavia and the formation of Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, and Kosovo as separate nations<sup>83, 84</sup>

### *Serb*

Serbs are a Slavic ethnic group that predominates in Serbia today. Early references to Serbs date back to the 6th century C.E. By the 7th century, the Serbs were settled south of the Carpathian Mountains in the Balkan Peninsula. Their religion is Eastern Orthodox. The Serb language is Serbian, which uses the Cyrillic alphabet. For five centuries, the Serbs were dominated by the Turks, but in the 19th century, they gained their independence.<sup>85, 86</sup>



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Serbian Men

### *Hungarian*

An extensive region of northern Serbia near the border with Hungary is populated by ethnic Hungarians. In this Vojvodina region, they speak Magyar, their native Hungarian language. Hungarians were culturally influenced by the Austrians, with whom they held joint power in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and by the Turks who occupied their territory for long periods. Catholicism is the predominant religion of the Hungarian people.<sup>87, 88, 89</sup>



© Aleksandar / flickr.com  
Hungarian women

<sup>81</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, "Serbia: People: Ethnic Groups," in *The World Factbook*, 28 April 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ri.html>

<sup>82</sup> Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Serbia: Profile," 29 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5388.htm>

<sup>83</sup> Borgna Brunner and David Johnson, "Timeline: The Former Yugoslavia," Fact Monster, 2007, <http://www.factmonster.com/spot/yugotimeline1.html>

<sup>84</sup> Carol J. Williams, "Yugoslavia Leadership Falls Apart: Ethnic Strife: A Virtual Coup by Serbs Leaves the Nation without a President, Croats Delay Any Move to Secede, New Violence is Feared," *Los Angeles Times*, 18 May 1991, [http://articles.latimes.com/1991-05-18/news/mn-1661\\_1\\_ethnic-serbs](http://articles.latimes.com/1991-05-18/news/mn-1661_1_ethnic-serbs)

<sup>85</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Serbo-Croatian Language," 2011, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9066822>

<sup>86</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Serbia: History: Antiquity: The Coming of the Slavs," 2011, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-43567#477200.hook>

<sup>87</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Hungarians," 2011, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9041546>

## Bosnian

The Bosnian people, who live near the city of Novi Pazar in southwestern Serbia, are descended from Slavic peoples of Bosnia. During the Ottoman Turkish occupation of the region (between the 15th and 19th centuries), large numbers of Bosnians converted to Islam to avoid religious persecution. Today, most of their descendants are Sunni Muslims. They speak Bosnian, the official language of Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>90, 91, 92</sup>



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Bosniak Children

The term “Bosniak” (as opposed to Bosnian) has been used to refer not only to ethnicity but also religious affiliation. Since 1993, Bosniak has become the official name for “Slav Muslims,” replacing the earlier term “Muslim.”<sup>93</sup> Bosniaks have lived closely among two other ethnic groups, Serbs and Croats, who inhabit the broader region and practice Orthodox Christianity and Roman Catholicism, respectively.<sup>94, 95, 96</sup>

## Albanian

For many centuries, ethnic Albanians have lived in the country now known as Kosovo. This region was formerly part of southern Serbia and its present independent status is still disputed by the Serbs. The history of the Albanian presence in the Kosovo region is similarly under dispute. During Ottoman rule, the ethnic Albanian population of Kosovo increased as many Serbs left the area in the late 1600s. Regardless of population shifts, however, the fact remains that both ethnic groups



© aljabak85 / flickr.com  
Albanian men in conversation

<sup>88</sup> Ethnologue, “Hungarian: A Language of Hungary,” 2009, [http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_language.asp?code=hun](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=hun)

<sup>89</sup> Ethnologue, “Languages of Serbia: Hungarian,” 2009, [http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_country.asp?name=RS](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=RS)

<sup>90</sup> oocities.com, “Short Definitions: Question: Who Are Bosniaks, Bosnian Serbs, Bosnian Croats?” 17 July 2003, [http://www.oocities.org/famous\\_bosniaks/english/bosniaks.html](http://www.oocities.org/famous_bosniaks/english/bosniaks.html)

<sup>91</sup> Ethnologue, “Languages of Serbia,” 2009, [http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_country.asp?name=RS](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=RS)

<sup>92</sup> Ethnologue, “Bosnian: A Language of Bosnia and Herzegovina,” 2009, [http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_language.asp?code=bos](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=bos)

<sup>93</sup> Bohdana Dimitrovova, “Bosniak or Muslim? Dilemma of One Nation with Two Names,” *Southeast European Politics* 2, no. 2 (October 2001): 94–108.

<sup>94</sup> NPR, “Bosniaks FTW!” 2008, [http://www.npr.org/blogs/politics/2008/10/bosniaks\\_ftw.html](http://www.npr.org/blogs/politics/2008/10/bosniaks_ftw.html)

<sup>95</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Bosnia and Herzegovina,” 2011, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-223951>

<sup>96</sup> Media Matters for America, “On PBS, Cokie Roberts Falsely Suggested Biden’s Reference to ‘Bosniaks’ Was a Gaffe,” 3 October 2008, <http://mediamatters.org/research/200810030001>

have coexisted in the area for centuries.<sup>97, 98, 99</sup> As an ethnic group, the Albanian people trace their roots and language to the ancient Illyrians of the western Balkans. The Albanians speak Albanian as their official language and use Roman (or Latin) script.<sup>100,</sup>

<sup>101</sup> In Serbia today, Albanians live primarily in the south, near the border with Kosovo.

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<sup>97</sup> BBC News, "Regions and Territories: Kosovo," 12 May 2009,

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country\\_profiles/3524092.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country_profiles/3524092.stm)

<sup>98</sup> Ivo Daalder and Michael O'Hanlon, "The Roots of the War," Frontline, PBS, 2008,

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kosovo/readings/roots.html>

<sup>99</sup> Louis Zanga, "Albanian Ethnic Study Focuses on Kosovo," Open Society Archives, 23 July 1985,

<http://www.osaarchivum.org/files/holdings/300/8/3/text/4-2-50.shtml>

<sup>100</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Albania: History: Antiquity: The Illyrians," 2011,

<http://search.eb.com/eb/article-42640>

<sup>101</sup> Ethnologue, "Albanian, Gheg: A Language of Serbia," 2009,

[http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_language.asp?code=aln](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=aln)

## Chapter 1 Assessment

1. Serbia's northern plains are the least fertile area of the country.

**False**

A relatively flat area that spreads across northern Serbia's Vojvodina province, the northern plains consist of rich soils nourished by rivers that cross through the area. The land owes much of its fertility to its geological past, when a shallow body of water called the Pannonian Sea covered the northern Balkans.

2. The Danube River is Serbia's longest river.

**True**

The Danube River is Serbia's longest river and its main drainage river. It flows south into Serbia from Hungary and traces much of Serbia's western border with Croatia before turning southeast onto Serbia's Pannonian Plain. On Serbia's eastern side, the Danube River follows the Serbian-Romanian border southeast and then departs Serbia, continuing southeast as the border between Romania and Bulgaria.

3. Belgrade is an ancient city and has been ruled by a number of different political entities.

**True**

Belgrade is an ancient city and has been ruled by a number of different political entities. Celts occupied its site as early as the 4th century B.C.E. After the 2nd century B.C.E., it became one of the major cities of the Roman Empire until the 4th century C.E., when it became part of the Byzantine Empire. Its strategic position between the Holy Roman Empire and the Ottoman Empire during the Middle Ages led to repeated attacks and occupation of the city by different forces.

4. The Battle of Kosovo occupies a large part of Serbian national mythology.

**True**

After the death in 1355 of Stephen Dušan (both king and czar during Serbia's Golden Age), the Ottoman Turks began their conquest of the Serbs. At the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, the medieval Serbian empire suffered complete collapse as Turkish armies surrounded the collapsing Byzantine Empire. The famous battle became part of Serbian national mythology, immortalized in epic poems and heroic ballads.

5. After World War II ended, Yugoslavia was reconstituted as a democratic nation.

**False**

In 1945, after World War II ended, Yugoslavia was reconstituted as a communist country named the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which included six republics: Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, Macedonia, and Montenegro. It also included the two Serbian independent provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo.

## Chapter 2 Religion

### Overview

Serbs adopted Christianity early in their history. By the 12th and 13th centuries, the Serbian state stabilized, and the Serbs followed Eastern religious authorities in Constantinople. This loyalty continued despite invitations from the pope to forge stronger ties between the church in Rome and the Serbian Orthodox Church.<sup>102</sup>



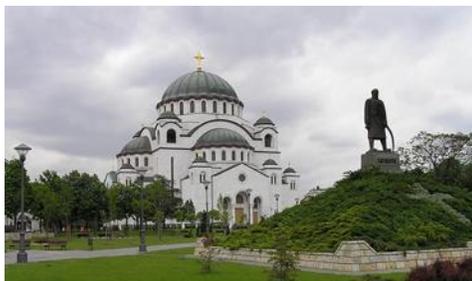
© Margita Perecca  
Serbian church

Under Turkish rule in the 14th and 15th centuries, the Greek patriarch presided over the Serbian Church, an uncomfortable situation for Serbs. The Turks confiscated lands that belonged to the Serbian Orthodox Church. Such offenses were an affront to Serbia's national identity, and contributed to the rebellion against Turkish rule. The Serbs resisted Roman Catholicism again when the Austrian empire seized land from the Turks. Eventually Serbia gained independence, including the right to freedom of religion.<sup>103</sup>

Approximately 85% of the Serbian people currently practice the Serbian Orthodox faith. Another 5.5% of the population is Roman Catholic, primarily those of ethnic Croatian and Hungarian background. These people live mainly in the northern province of Vojvodina. Around 3.2% of the remaining population is Muslim, including ethnic Albanians who live in the south and Slavic Muslims who live in the Sandzak region (along the border with Montenegro). Some of the Roma people in Serbia are also Muslim. The remainder of the population includes Protestants, Jews, atheists, and others.<sup>104</sup>

### The Early Church and Its Connections to the State

The Serbian Orthodox Church originates from Byzantine Christianity of the Eastern Roman Empire. It is an autocephalous (independent) member of the Orthodox Church. The Serbian Orthodox Church embodies Serbian history, culture, and resistance to Turkish rule. Religion was consolidated under Saint Sava, son of early Serbian political leader Stefan I Nemanja. This occurred during the Fourth Crusade, when Latin



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St. Sava Church in Belgrade

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<sup>102</sup> Charles Sudetic, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Serbs and Serbia: Vojvodina and Montenegro," in *A Country Study: Yugoslavia (Former)*, Glenn E. Curtis, ed., Library of Congress, December 1990, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/yutoc.html>

<sup>103</sup> Charles Sudetic, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Serbs and Serbia: Vojvodina and Montenegro," in *A Country Study: Yugoslavia (Former)*, Glenn E. Curtis, ed., Library of Congress, December 1990, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/yutoc.html>

<sup>104</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, "Serbia," in *The World Factbook*, 28 April 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ri.html>

armies were attacking Byzantium and the two major branches of Christianity were strongly divided. Serbia maintained good relations with Rome, however, and Pope Honorius III promoted Serbia's development when he crowned Stefan II state leader and recognized Serbia's political autonomy in 1218.<sup>105</sup> Sava, brother of Stefan II, became the first archbishop of the new Serbian Orthodox Church in 1219, and church and state remained closely linked for centuries.<sup>106</sup> Besides strengthening the bond between church and state, Saint Sava and his brother wrote a biography of Stefan Nemanja, their father, establishing the tradition of honoring rulers in Serbian literature.<sup>107</sup>

## The Role of Religion in the Government

The Serbian Constitution does not specify a state religion and establishes freedom of religion. At the same time, laws in Serbia limit religious practices of some groups and give preference to the Serbian Orthodox Church. Some religious groups are denied legal status. To attain legal status they may have to register through "an invasive and burdensome procedure" that requires collecting personal background information on all church members.<sup>108</sup> The Ministry of Religion is



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Woman lighting prayer candles

sometimes uncooperative in this process, creating bureaucratic obstacles or failing to respond to deadlines.<sup>109</sup> Members of minority religious groups have reported acts of discrimination (including negative media reports, vandalism, and hate crimes) against them.<sup>110, 111</sup> Public officials have sometimes spoken Religious law in Serbia recognizes seven "traditional" religions. Among them are the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Roman Catholic Church, the Reformed Christian Church, the Slovak Evangelical Church, and the Evangelical Christian Church. The law also provides the Jewish and Islamic communities the right to practice their religion. The Serbian government has helped fund construction of Orthodox Church buildings, and it declares some Orthodox religious celebrations as

<sup>105</sup> Charles Sudetic, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Serbs and Serbia: Vojvodina and Montenegro," in *A Country Study: Yugoslavia (Former)*, Glenn E. Curtis, ed., Library of Congress, December 1990, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/yutoc.html>

<sup>106</sup> Serbian Orthodox Diocese of Raska and Patrixren, "History of Serbia and Montenegro: The Nemanjic Dynasty," n.d., <http://www.kosovo.net/serhist.html>

<sup>107</sup> Charles Sudetic, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Serbs and Serbia: Vojvodina and Montenegro," in *A Country Study: Yugoslavia (Former)*, Glenn E. Curtis, ed., Library of Congress, December 1990, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/yutoc.html>

<sup>108</sup> Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "Serbia: International Religious Freedom Report 2009," October 2009, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127335.htm>

<sup>109</sup> Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "Serbia: International Religious Freedom Report 2010," 17 November 2010, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148980.htm>

<sup>110</sup> SETimes.com, "US Issues Annual Report on Religious Freedom in Balkans," 18 November 2011, [http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en\\_GB/newsbriefs/setimes/newsbriefs/2010/11/18/nb-01](http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/newsbriefs/setimes/newsbriefs/2010/11/18/nb-01)

<sup>111</sup> UN Human rights council, "Report of the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Asma Jahangir," 28 December 2009, <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/religion/docs/A-HRC-13-40-Add3.pdf>

national holidays. Public schools must offer classes in either civic education or one of the seven traditional religions.<sup>112, 113</sup>

The Serbian Ministry of Religion has denied registration to the following: the League of Baptists, the Pentecostal Church, and the Hare Krishna movement. The Serbian government recognizes the Russian and Greek Orthodox Churches as legitimate within Serbia, even though they have not formally registered with the government.<sup>114</sup> It excludes the Orthodox Churches of Montenegro and Macedonia. Recent progress is reflected in the granting of registration requests for the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Free Church of Belgrade, Votive Church of Zion, the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement, and the Protestant Evangelical Church "Spiritual Center."<sup>115</sup>

## Religion and Daily Life

Although most Serbs identify as members of the Serbian Orthodox Church, participation in formal religious activities is relatively low.<sup>116</sup> Church attendance dropped significantly during the communist era. The official doctrine at that time was atheism, and thus, the government marginalized the practice of formal religion. During the 1990s, church attendance was estimated at less than 10% of the population.<sup>117, 118</sup> Even now, most people prefer to attend church on holidays, rather than weekly.<sup>119</sup> Because church attendance is minimal, overt religious practices are not a daily ritual.<sup>120</sup>

Since the majority of Serbs identify with the Serbian Orthodox religion, it permeates everyday life. Historically, religious identification in Serbia was expressed through nationalism, as



© Kevin Burden  
Waiting to pay respects

<sup>112</sup> Bojan Aleksov, "Religious Education in Serbia," *Religion, State, & Society* 32, no. 4 (December 2004), [http://www.policy.hu/aleksov/book\\_doc03.pdf](http://www.policy.hu/aleksov/book_doc03.pdf)

<sup>113</sup> Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "Serbia: International Religious Freedom Report 2010," 17 November 2010, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148980.htm>

<sup>114</sup> Ellen Harvey, "EU Accession and Serbia's Discriminatory Religion Policy," 24 January 2011, <http://www.rfiaonline.org/extras/articles/711-eu-accession-serbia-religion-policy>

<sup>115</sup> Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "Serbia: International Religious Freedom Report 2010," 17 November 2010, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148980.htm>

<sup>116</sup> Nationmaster.com, "Serbia and Montenegro: Religion," 2011, <http://www.nationmaster.com/country/yi-serbia-and-montenegro/rel-religion>

<sup>117</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Serbia: People: Religion," 2011, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-228323>

<sup>118</sup> In Communion, "The Serbian Orthodox Church," 2009, <http://incommunion.org/?p=289>

<sup>119</sup> Everyculture.com, "Serbs: Religion and Expressive Culture," 2011, <http://www.everyculture.com/Europe/Serbs-Religion-and-Expressive-Culture.html>

<sup>120</sup> Violeta Cvetkovska Ockoljic and Tatjana Cvetkovski, "The Influence of Religion on the Creation of National Identity in Serbia," *Journal of Identity and Migration Studies* 4, no. 2 (2010): 81–103. [http://e-migration.ro/jims/Vol4\\_No2\\_2010/Articles/JIMS\\_Vol4\\_No2\\_2010\\_pp81-103\\_OCOKOLIJC.pdf](http://e-migration.ro/jims/Vol4_No2_2010/Articles/JIMS_Vol4_No2_2010_pp81-103_OCOKOLIJC.pdf)

seen in the Serbia-Kosovo conflict.<sup>121</sup> Also, the state's alignment with the Serbian Orthodox Church can have repercussions for members of other religions. Although non-members of the Serbian Orthodox Church or its affiliates may suffer acts of discrimination, there has been some progress toward including a wider range of organized religions in Serbia.<sup>122</sup>

People who live in the Serbian countryside are more likely to engage in religious practices that affect their everyday lives. Here, people still adhere to folk traditions with religious roots. Their belief in supernatural beings such as ghosts or vampires draws anthropologists to the region for study. Rural Serbs may also observe traditional religious holidays with more colorful and lively festivals than are typically found in the cities.<sup>123</sup>

## Religious Events and Holidays

The Serbian government recognizes three religious holidays as national holidays: Orthodox Good Friday, Easter, and Christmas. On these days people stay home from work—only stores and certain institutions remain open for business.<sup>124, 125</sup> Employees who practice other faiths approved by the government can also receive time off work to observe their religious holidays. These include Catholic Christmas, Good Friday, and Easter; Islamic Kurban and Ramadan Bajram; and Jewish Yom Kippur.<sup>126</sup>

### *Orthodox Good Friday*

Orthodox Good Friday, a national holiday, is part of the Easter celebration. It begins on the Friday before Easter and ends one day after Easter. Family members eat only fruits, vegetables, and nuts on Good Friday. They attend church and perform religious rituals on this most solemn day of the Easter holiday.<sup>127, 128</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Religious Tolerance.org, Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance, "Religious Violence: Religious Aspects of the Yugoslavia-Kosovo Conflict," 8 April 2007,

[http://www.religioustolerance.org/war\\_koso.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/war_koso.htm)

<sup>122</sup> Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "Serbia: International Religious Freedom Report 2010," 17 November 2010, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148980.htm>

<sup>123</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Serbia: Cultural Life: Daily Life and Social Customs," 2011, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-228350>

<sup>124</sup> Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "Serbia: International Religious Freedom Report 2010," 17 November 2010, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148980.htm>

<sup>125</sup> VisitSerbia.org, "General Information: Holidays: Non-Working Days," 2011, <http://www.visitserbia.org/About-Serbia-72-14-1>

<sup>126</sup> Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "Serbia: International Religious Freedom Report 2010," 17 November 2010, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148980.htm>

<sup>127</sup> VisitSerbia.org, "General Information: Holidays: Non-Working Days," 2011, <http://www.visitserbia.org/About-Serbia-72-14-1>

<sup>128</sup> Umiacs.umd.edu, "Religious and Holyday Foods: Easter," n.d., [http://www.umiacs.umd.edu/users/lpv/YU/HTML/food\\_religious.html](http://www.umiacs.umd.edu/users/lpv/YU/HTML/food_religious.html)

## *Easter*

Easter Sunday and the following Monday are national holidays in Serbia. Serbian families celebrate Easter with a number of special events. Following a period of fasting and not eating meat, they attend church services to remember Christ's resurrection. After the service, it is traditional for families to ask the parish priest to bless prepared colored eggs symbolizing rebirth. Family members then share formal dinners together, breaking their fast with specially prepared meat dishes and other foods.<sup>129, 130</sup>



© HiFiJazz / flickr.com  
Easter in Belgrade

## *Christmas*

A national holiday, Orthodox Christmas falls on 7 January. Families celebrate it with the ritual burning of a special tree, followed by feasting and celebrating.<sup>131</sup>



© themaxsons / flickr.com  
Serbian flag Christmas ornament

## *Krsna Slava (Patron Saint Day)*

Krsna Slava is classified as a working holiday in Serbia.<sup>132</sup> Therefore, most workplaces remain operational. This holiday began in the 9th century when the Christian religion spread among Serbs. Historians believe that either a village or an individual family would choose a patron saint as a protector. That saint's birthday eventually became the date on which family members would receive baptism. In successive generations, the saint's name and family celebration date became a yearly tradition passed from father to son.<sup>133, 134</sup>

## **Buildings of Worship**

Orthodox churches in Serbia share similar design patterns. A circular or rectangular central section with formal chairs often appears near the front, where dignitaries or

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<sup>129</sup> About.com, "Eastern European Food: Serbian Orthodox Easter," 2009, <http://easteuropeanfood.about.com/od/easter/a/orthodoxeaster.htm>

<sup>130</sup> World Travel Guide, "Serbia Public Holidays," 2011, [http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/323/public\\_holidays/Europe/Serbia.html](http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/323/public_holidays/Europe/Serbia.html)

<sup>131</sup> Barbara Rolek, "Serbian Christmas Traditions," 2011, <http://easteuropeanfood.about.com/od/christmaseve/a/serbianxmas.htm>

<sup>132</sup> World Travel Guide, "Serbia Public Holidays," 2011, [http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/323/public\\_holidays/Europe/Serbia.html](http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/323/public_holidays/Europe/Serbia.html)

<sup>133</sup> About.com, "Eastern European Food - Krsna Slava: Serbian Patron Saint Day," 2009, <http://easteuropeanfood.about.com/od/holidaysfestivals/a/krsnaslava.htm>

<sup>134</sup> New Gracanica Monastery, "Monastery – Tradition," n.d., <http://www.newgracanica.com/english/monastery.html>

important guests sit.<sup>135</sup> In contrast, the general public stands during the services because there are no pews or seats for them.<sup>136</sup> Many churches are constructed with a dome, symbolizing heaven. Frescoes reflecting biblical teachings and paintings of religious figures adorn church walls and interior screens. Ottoman rulers often covered these religious scenes with plaster, but the Serbs later restored them.<sup>137, 138</sup>



© Ivan Ivanić / flickr.com  
Nikolajevska Church

Serbian Orthodox churches are found in both city and countryside across Serbia. Saint Sava Cathedral in Belgrade is Serbia's largest Serbian Orthodox church, and can hold 10,000 people.<sup>139, 140</sup> Nikolajevska (Saint Nicholas), also located in Belgrade, was constructed in the 18th century in the baroque style. It contains icons painted by Serbia's most famous icon painter, Dimitrije Bacevic, and is said to hold remains of Saint Andrew.<sup>141</sup> Another historical Orthodox church in Belgrade is the Orthodox Cathedral, directly across from the Patriarchate. The Patriarchate (or office of the patriarch) houses the head of the Serbian Orthodox Church.<sup>142</sup>

Christian monasteries also dot the Serbian countryside, many of them dating back centuries. The Studenica Monastery, a UNESCO World Heritage site, is one of the most important of these monasteries.<sup>143</sup> Located in a small village in the Raška District, it was constructed at the close of the 12th century. The "Western Gate" at the entrance is built of stone topped with a wooden pyramid-shaped roof. The monastery includes a residence hall, a dining hall, an old stone building,



© Mazbln / Wikipedia.org  
Studenica Monastery

<sup>135</sup> Melissa Enderle, "Churches of Serbia: Serbian Orthodox Churches," Sights of Serbia, 2006, <http://homepage.mac.com/melissaenderle/Serbia/churches.html>

<sup>136</sup> Sarah Wagner, "Guidelines for Visiting an Orthodox Church," *Shoro: The Syriac Orthodox Christian Digest* 1, no. 8 (2005), <http://www.socdigest.org/articles/02jul05.html>

<sup>137</sup> Melissa Enderle, "Churches of Serbia: Serbian Orthodox Churches," Sights of Serbia, 2006, <http://homepage.mac.com/melissaenderle/Serbia/churches.html>

<sup>138</sup> Melissa Enderle, "Churches of Serbia: Serbian Orthodox Churches," Sights of Serbia, 2006, <http://homepage.mac.com/melissaenderle/Serbia/churches.html>

<sup>139</sup> Viabalkans.com, "The Cathedral of Saint Sava," 6 October 2010, <http://www.viabalkans.com/en/historic-sites/sacred-objects/the-cathedral-of-saint-sava/>

<sup>140</sup> Serbia.travel, "Cathedral of Saint Sava, Belgrade," 2011, <http://www.serbia.travel/culture/religious-buildings/orthodox-churches-xx-century/cathedral-of-saint-sava-belgrade/>

<sup>141</sup> Beograd.rs, "Church Architecture: St. Nikolaj's (Nikolajevska) Church," 24 August 2004, <http://www.beograd.rs/cms/view.php?id=201396>

<sup>142</sup> Medical Tourism in Belgrade, "City Info & Famous Belgrade Sites," 2007, <http://medical-tourism-in-belgrade.com/>

<sup>143</sup> Serbiatouristguide.com, "Student Monastery-Mother of All Monasteries," n.d., <http://www.serbiatouristguide.com/live/Destinations?contentId=906>

the King’s Church, and the larger Church of the Virgin Mary (also called Church of Our Lady). White marble covers the outer walls, and frescoes and paintings adorn the interior walls and structures.<sup>144, 145</sup>

Another famous monastery is Milaševa Monastery in southwest Serbia. It was founded in approximately 1234 by King Vladislav. Shortly thereafter the body of Saint Sava was entombed there. Turkish forces burned the monastery in the 17th century, but it was later rebuilt. In the church, the gravesite of Saint Sava is commemorated with lit candles. Paintings of Saint Sava and King Vladislav from the 13th century were heavily damaged as a result of fighting, both during the Ottoman period and also during World War II.<sup>146</sup>

### Behavior in Places of Worship

Statues, frescoes, and images of Christ and other Christian figures are sacred and should be approached quietly and with respect.<sup>147, 148</sup> The Orthodox churches represent not only Serbia’s religious background but also the people’s political and cultural heritage.<sup>149, 150</sup>



© graneits / flickr.com  
Appropriate dress in church

### Exchange 1: May I enter the church?

Soldier:	May I enter the church?	mogoo lee daa oodyem oo tsRkvoo?
Local:	Yes.	daa

Visitors to Serbian churches and monasteries should dress modestly and avoid wearing skimpy, revealing, or dirty clothing. Shorts and miniskirts are not appropriate. Approved dress includes clean shirts and long pants for men and skirts or pants, along with blouses or sweaters for women.<sup>151</sup> Visitors should remove hats before entering and refrain from

<sup>144</sup> UNESCO.org, “World Heritage: Studenica Monastery,” 2009, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/389>

<sup>145</sup> Melissa Enderle, “Churches of Serbia: Serbian Orthodox Churches,” Sights of Serbia, 2006, <http://homepage.mac.com/melissaenderle/Serbia/churches.html>

<sup>146</sup> Melissa Enderle, “Churches of Serbia: Serbian Orthodox Churches,” Sights of Serbia, 2006, <http://homepage.mac.com/melissaenderle/Serbia/churches.html>

<sup>147</sup> Anthony Alevizopoulous, “The Sacred Icons and the Holy Cross,” 20 April 2011, <http://molonlabe70.blogspot.com/2011/04/sacred-icons-and-holy-cross.html>

<sup>148</sup> Sarah Wagner, “Guidelines for Visiting an Orthodox Church,” *Shoro: The Syriac Orthodox Christian Digest* 1, no. 8 (2005), <http://www.socdigest.org/articles/02jul05.html>

<sup>149</sup> Jim Forest, “The Serbian Orthodox Church,” 12 December 2004, <http://www.incommunion.org/2004/12/12/the-serbian-orthodox-church/>

<sup>150</sup> Christopher Deliso, *Culture and Customs of Serbia and Montenegro*. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2009), 35.

<sup>151</sup> Expatify.com, “Learning the Social Customs of Serbia,” 2011, <http://www.expatify.com/serbia/learning-the-social-customs-of-serbia.html>

touching paintings or statues. Although men and women can both enter churches and worship together, women are not allowed to walk into the altar space behind the wall or screen that holds religious icons and paintings (the iconostasis). All visitors should keep their voices low and refrain from laughing loudly or making any remarks that could disturb others.<sup>152</sup>

**Exchange 2: Do I need to cover my head?**

<b>Soldier:</b>	Do I need to cover my head?	daa lee moRam daa pokReeyem glaavoo?
<b>Local:</b>	No, but if you visit a monastery you might have to.	ne, aalee tyete mozhdaa moRetee ako poseteete manasteer

Times of prayer depend on the protocols of individual churches. If a service is taking place when the guests enter, they should stand silently to observe and not walk around.<sup>153</sup>

**Exchange 3: When do you hold services?**

<b>Soldier:</b>	When do you hold services?	kaadaa ye sloozhbaa?
<b>Local:</b>	On Sundays.	nedelyom

When visiting a Muslim mosque, visitors should also conduct themselves politely and modestly. Women’s clothing should be loose, and skirts should not be shorter than knee length. Men should wear loose pants and shirts. All clothing should always be clean and neat. It is customary in a mosque for a woman to cover her head with a scarf before entering, and everyone may be required to remove their shoes.<sup>154</sup>

In general, visitors to any church or building of worship should follow rules that are posted in writing or that local people are observing. Visitors should not bring food or

<sup>152</sup> TravelSerbia.Info, “Your Travel Guide for Serbia – Visiting Churches and Monasteries,” 2011, <http://www.travelsrbia.info/manners-customs.php>

<sup>153</sup> TravelSerbia.info, “Your Travel Guide for Serbia – Visiting Churches and Monasteries,” 2011, <http://www.travelsrbia.info/manners-customs.php>

<sup>154</sup> Educationislam.org, “Etiquettes of Visiting a Mosque (Masjid),” n.d., [http://www.educationislam.org/educationislam\\_download/ETIQUETTES.pdf](http://www.educationislam.org/educationislam_download/ETIQUETTES.pdf)

drink into a church, monastery, or mosque, and they should not take photographs inside or outside the building unless given permission.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Expatify.com, “Learning the Social Customs of Serbia,” 2011, <http://www.expatify.com/serbia/learning-the-social-customs-of-serbia.html>

## Chapter 2 Assessment

1. The Turks confiscated lands that belonged to the Serbian Orthodox Church.  
**True**  
During the Ottoman occupation, the Turks confiscated lands that belonged to the Serbian Orthodox Church. Such offenses were an affront to Serbia's national identity, and contributed to the rebellion against Turkish rule. The Serbs also resisted Roman Catholicism when the Austrian empire seized land from the Turks. Eventually Serbia gained independence, including the right to practice their religion.
2. The Serbian Constitution does not specify a state religion.  
**True**  
The Serbian Constitution does not specify a state religion and establishes freedom of religion. At the same time, laws in Serbia limit religious practices of some groups and give preference to the Serbian Orthodox Church. In some cases, religious groups are denied legal status.
3. Participation in formal religious activities in Serbia is relatively low.  
**True**  
Although most Serbs identify as members of the Serbian Orthodox Church, participation in formal religious activities is relatively low. Church attendance dropped significantly during the communist era. It has since generally remained low, with most people preferring to attend church on holidays, rather than attend weekly worship services.
4. Family members fast from food and drink during the Serbian Orthodox Christmas celebration.  
**False**  
Families celebrate Christmas with the ritual burning of a special tree, followed by feasting and celebrating.
5. A Serbian Orthodox church in Belgrade contains icons painted by Serbia's most famous icon painter.  
**True**  
Nikolajevska (Saint Nicholas), located in Belgrade, is a Serbian Orthodox church that was constructed in the 18th century in the baroque style. It contains icons painted by Serbia's most famous icon painter, Dimitrije Bacevic, and is said to hold remains of Saint Andrew.

## Chapter 3 Traditions

### Honor and Values

The Serbian state was ruled and heavily influenced by the Ottoman Turks from 1389 through the 18th century. During this period, the mostly Christian Serbian population saw their rights curtailed and their traditions suppressed. The occupiers destroyed many monasteries and churches—symbols of Serbian culture. However, Serbs continued to express their culture through a robust oral tradition of prose, poetry, and song.<sup>156</sup> Even after 400 years of occupation, the Serbian people had maintained their traditions.<sup>157</sup> <sup>158</sup>



Courtesy of Wikipedia  
Siege at Belgrade

Serbs have a strong sense of national unity and collectivism. This collectivist mentality extends from families to communities to political groups, and influences the way they build relationships and conduct business. The Serbian Orthodox Church is also an important part of Serbian national identity.<sup>159</sup> Besides historically supporting collective values, the Church promotes respect for authority, patriarchy, and Serbian traditions.<sup>160,161</sup>

### Greetings, Gestures, and Communication Styles

When foreign male visitors greet Serbian men, they should shake hands, and look directly into the other's eyes. Direct eye contact is important to Serbs, regardless of age and gender; it communicates respect and a straightforward attitude. Serbs value trust, using nonverbal communication such as eye contact, physical distance, and representative gestures to gauge a person's trustworthiness.<sup>162, 163, 164, 165</sup>



DoD Image  
US Colonel and Serbian doctor

<sup>156</sup> Pavle Ivić, "Foreword," in *The History of Serbian Culture*, Randall A Major, Trans., 1995, [http://www.rastko.rs/isk/index\\_e.html](http://www.rastko.rs/isk/index_e.html)

<sup>157</sup> Nada Milosevic-Djordjevic, "The History of Serbian Culture: The Oral Tradition," in *The History of Serbian Culture*, Randall A Major, Trans., 1995, [http://www.rastko.rs/isk/nmilosevic-oral\\_tradition.html](http://www.rastko.rs/isk/nmilosevic-oral_tradition.html)

<sup>158</sup> Steven W. Sowards, "The Serbian Revolution and the Serbian State" In *Twenty-Five Lectures on Modern Balkan History* modified 11 June 2009, <http://staff.lib.msu.edu/sowards/balkan/lecture5.html>

<sup>159</sup> William W. Hagen, "The Balkans' Lethal Nationalisms," *Foreign Affairs* (July 1999): 52, <http://www.la.wayne.edu/polisci/kdk/global/sources/hagen.htm>

<sup>160</sup> Dijana Gaćeša, "Fundamentalist Tendencies of Serbian Orthodox Christianity," *Western Balkans Security Observer* 7–8 (October 2007–March 2008): 65-81.

<sup>161</sup> Marat Terteroy, *Doing Business with Serbia* (London, UK: GMB Publishing, Ltd., 2006), 31-32.

<sup>162</sup> Culture Crossing, "Greetings," n.d., [http://www.culturecrossing.net/basics\\_business\\_student\\_details.php?Id=7&CID=235](http://www.culturecrossing.net/basics_business_student_details.php?Id=7&CID=235)

When foreign men or women greet Serbian women, they should offer a light handshake only. Serbian friends and family members may hug or kiss each other lightly on the cheeks, alternating three times. Such expressive behavior, however, is not appropriate for visitors to the country.<sup>166, 167</sup>

**Exchange 4: Good afternoon.**

Soldier:	Good afternoon.	dobaR dan
Local:	Good afternoon.	dobaR dan

If seated when meeting a Serbian person, the guest should stand up.<sup>168</sup> This is especially important if the person is a woman or is elderly.

The spoken greeting that accompanies a handshake varies. If meeting for the first time, it is appropriate to say, “Good afternoon” or “Good morning.” When greeting someone you have already met, you may say something more casual, such as “How are you?”

**Exchange 5: How are you?**

Soldier:	How are you?	kako ste?
Local:	Fine, very well.	dobRo, veoma dobRo

Because Serbs have great national pride, a visitor who knows something about Serbian history and shows eagerness to learn more can earn respect. This approach will generally lead to the most cooperation from local people.<sup>169</sup>

Visitors should avoid discussing politically sensitive topics such as the NATO bombings or the status of Kosovo.<sup>170, 171</sup> The best policy is to remain open-minded and friendly,

<sup>163</sup> Laurence Mitchell, *Bradt Travel Guide Serbia* (Guilford, CT: Bradt Travel Guides, Ltd., 2007), 86–87.

<sup>164</sup> Marat Terterov, *Doing Business with Serbia* (London, UK: GMB Publishing, Ltd., 2006), 36.

<sup>165</sup> Culture Crossing, “Eye Contact,” n.d.,

[http://www.culturecrossing.net/basics\\_business\\_student\\_details.php?Id=10&CID=235](http://www.culturecrossing.net/basics_business_student_details.php?Id=10&CID=235)

<sup>166</sup> Culture Crossing, “Greetings,” n.d.,

[http://www.culturecrossing.net/basics\\_business\\_student\\_details.php?Id=7&CID=235](http://www.culturecrossing.net/basics_business_student_details.php?Id=7&CID=235)

<sup>167</sup> Laurence Mitchell, *Bradt Travel Guide Serbia* (Guilford, CT: Bradt Travel Guides, Ltd., 2007), 86–87.

<sup>168</sup> Dusan Vuksanovic, “Serbian Business Etiquette,” n.d.,

<http://negotiation.pbworks.com/w/page/5558872/Doing%20Business%20in%20Serbia%20Culture-DosDonts>

<sup>169</sup> Dusan Vuksanovic, “Serbian Business Etiquette,” n.d.,

<http://negotiation.pbworks.com/w/page/5558872/Doing%20Business%20in%20Serbia%20Culture-DosDonts>

<sup>170</sup> Laurence Mitchell, *Bradt Travel Guide Serbia* (Guilford, CT: Bradt Travel Guides Ltd., 2007), 86.

keeping the conversation light. Be informed about past and current events, and offer opinions when asked.

**Exchange 6: Hi, Mr. Petrovich.**

Soldier:	Hi, Mr. Petrovich.	dobaR dan, gospodeene petRoveetyoo!
Local:	Hello!	zdRavo
Soldier:	Are you doing well?	daa lee ste dobRo?
Local:	Yes.	daa

Foreign visitors should conduct themselves conservatively. Address people formally and avoid first names unless you have been invited to do otherwise.

In casual conversation, Serbs tend to be very direct and open.<sup>172</sup> It is common for someone to ask a question that could be considered overly personal in the U.S. Visitors should be careful not to overreact if a Serbian person asks about their personal tastes or personal life.<sup>173</sup>

Serbs are very family oriented.<sup>174</sup> During initial exchanges, it is appropriate to politely ask about family members.

**Exchange 7: How is your family?**

Soldier:	How is your family?	kako vam ye poRodeetsa?
Local:	They are doing fine, thank you.	hvala, dobRo ye

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<sup>171</sup> Dusan Vuksanovic, "Serbian Business Etiquette," n.d., <http://negotiation.pbworks.com/w/page/5558872/Doing%20Business%20in%20Serbia%20Culture-DosDonts>

<sup>172</sup> Culture Crossing, "Serbia: Communication Style," n.d., [http://www.culturecrossing.net/basics\\_business\\_student\\_details.php?Id=8&CID=235](http://www.culturecrossing.net/basics_business_student_details.php?Id=8&CID=235)

<sup>173</sup> Centre for Intercultural Learning, "Cultural Information-Serbia-Conversations," 15 October 2009, <http://www.intercultures.ca/cil-cai/ci-ic-eng.asp?iso=yu>

<sup>174</sup> SerbianDream.com, "Culture," 2011, <http://www.serbiandream.com/index.php/en/activities/culture>

Whether meeting or taking leave of a person or group of people, visitors should remember to acknowledge the situation using clear, polite expressions.

**Exchange 8: Good night!**

Soldier:	Good night!	lakoo noty!
Local:	Good night!	lakoo noty!

**Hospitality and Gift-Giving**

If invited to a Serbian person’s home for a meal or a celebration, observe cultural protocols. Serbs value punctuality in others, even though they frequently do not arrive on time.<sup>175</sup> Given this mixed message, it is advisable for a foreign guest to err on the side of caution and arrive on time.<sup>176</sup> Guests should dress appropriately in clean, reserved clothing and accept hospitality graciously.



© neverending september / flickr.com  
Waiting at the table

**Exchange 9: Thank you for your hospitality.**

Soldier:	Thank you for your hospitality.	zaesta sam vam zahvalan na gostopReemstvoo
Local:	There’s nothing to it.	neeeye to neeshta

Serbs are genial, warm hosts who try to make their guests feel comfortable. They may feel slighted if someone refuses an offer of coffee, tea, or any other specially prepared food or drink. Therefore, the guests should politely accept what is offered to them.<sup>177</sup> Often, as a welcome to the home, a host will immediately serve black coffee, a homemade or local *rakija* (brandy), or a small amount of sweet fruit preserves followed by a glass of water.<sup>178</sup>

<sup>175</sup> Culture Crossing, “Serbia: Views of Time,” n.d., [http://www.culturecrossing.net/basics\\_business\\_student\\_details.php?Id=11&CID=235](http://www.culturecrossing.net/basics_business_student_details.php?Id=11&CID=235)

<sup>176</sup> Culture Crossing, “Views of Time,” n.d., [http://www.culturecrossing.net/basics\\_business\\_student\\_details.php?Id=11&CID=235](http://www.culturecrossing.net/basics_business_student_details.php?Id=11&CID=235)

<sup>177</sup> Laurence Mitchell, *Bradt Travel Guide Serbia* (Bucks, UK: Bradt Travel Guides, Ltd., 2007), 86.

<sup>178</sup> VisitMeSerbia.com, “Manners and Customs: House Visits,” 2010, <http://www.visitmeserbia.com/en/serbian-manners-and-customs-35.html>

It is customary to bring a gift when invited into a Serbian person's home. An appropriate gift is a box of chocolates, a bottle of wine, or flowers.<sup>179</sup>

**Exchange 10: This gift is for you.**

Soldier:	This gift is for you.	ovo ye vash poklon
Local:	Thank you.	hvaalaa

When toasting each other or someone specific, it is important for those initiating and receiving the toast to maintain direct eye contact. Eye contact is especially important in such social situations. To either break eye contact or avoid looking into the other's eyes can be misunderstood as disrespect or weakness.<sup>180</sup>

If a guest is drinking an alcoholic beverage, the host or hostess will automatically fill it when it is empty. Do not empty the glass completely if you do not want more.<sup>181</sup>

If you are curious about something you are drinking or eating, you may ask what it is.

**Exchange 11: What is the name of this dish?**

Soldier:	What is the name of this dish?	kako se zove ovo yelo?
Local:	This is gibanica.	ovo ye geebaneetsa

Since Serbs take great pride in the food they prepare, showing interest in the meal is a welcome compliment.

<sup>179</sup> VisitMeSerbia.com, "Manners and Customs: House Visits," 2010, <http://www.visitmeserbia.com/en/serbian-manners-and-customs-35.html>

<sup>180</sup> Laurence Mitchell, *Bradt Travel Guide Serbia* (Guilford, CT: Bradt Travel Guides Ltd., 2007), 86–87.

<sup>181</sup> VisitMeSerbia.com, "Manners and Customs: House Visits," 2010, <http://www.visitmeserbia.com/en/serbian-manners-and-customs-35.html>

**Exchange 12: This food is very tasty.**

Soldier:	This food is very tasty.	ovaa hRaanaa ye veomaa ookoosnaa
Local:	Thank you, it's called sarma.	hvaalaa zove se saRma

Showing interest in a meal can also stimulate conversation, promote goodwill, and lead to an exchange of useful information.

**Exchange 13: What ingredients are used?**

Soldier:	What ingredients are used to make sarma?	koye sastoyke koReesteete za pRavlyenye saRme?
Local:	Shredded sauerkraut and sauerkraut leaves, ground meat, onion, egg, salt, pepper, parsley, rice, paprika, bacon.	keeselee koopoos, leestovee keesellog koopoosa, mleveno meso, look, yaye, so, beebeR, peRshoon, peeReenach, mlevena tsRvena papReeka, slaneena

**Eating Customs**

Similar to western societies, Serbs eat three meals a day with lunch generally being the largest.<sup>182</sup> Serbian food reflects the influence of Greek and Croatian cooking. It tends to be spicy and meat-based. The national food of Serbia, *cevapcici*, is grilled, minced meat, usually formed into small cylindrical shapes.<sup>183</sup> It is usually eaten with plain onions and warm bread.<sup>184</sup>



© Milos Novakovic  
Serbian Food

Another common food is *pljeskavica*—grilled, minced meat sprinkled with spices and formed into a patty shape. *Sarma* is cabbage stuffed with minced beef or pork. *Podvarak* is roasted meat in sauerkraut. Another typical

<sup>182</sup> Christopher Deliso, *Culture and Customs of Serbia and Montenegro* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2009), 84–95.

<sup>183</sup> Maps of World, “Serbia Food,” 2009, <http://www.mapsofworld.com/serbia/people-culture-festivals/food.html>

<sup>184</sup> Travel Serbia, “Food and Drink in Serbia,” 2011, <http://www.travelsrbia.info/foodanddrink.php>

food is *musaka*, a baked dish of minced pork or beef with a mixture of eggs and potatoes. *Gibanica*, a baked dish, is made of pastry leaves, eggs, and cheese. *Proja* is a type of corn bread. The famous national drink is *šljivovica*, a plum brandy.<sup>185</sup>

While eating at a Serbian table, there are a few formal rules. Guests wait for their host to begin eating before they start.<sup>186</sup> They should not hesitate to ask for more food. Typically, soup is the first course, followed by a main course, and then dessert.

When eating dinner in a Serbian person’s home, it is best to eat everything on the plate, except a small amount. This tells the host you enjoyed the food.

At the end of the meal, guests should remain seated until the host leaves the table. Finally, a guest should compliment the host or hostess on the quality of the food.

**Exchange 14: This food tastes so good.**

Soldier:	This food tastes so good.	hRana ye yako ookoosna
Local:	Thank you.	hvaalaa

The customs during *Krsna Slava* (Patron Saint Day), the celebration in honor of the family’s patron saint, are more intricate than those at a typical dinner party.<sup>187</sup> It is an honor to be invited to such an event. Guests must bring a gift, such as a bottle of fine wine, and participate in all ceremonial activities.<sup>188</sup> This includes responding to toasts, eating *slavsko žito* (honey-sweetened boiled wheat, with nuts), and graciously accepting the hospitality.

**Dress Codes**

The dress code in Serbia today is similar to that of the U.S. and Western Europe. Typically, men and women wear business attire while at work.<sup>189</sup> For a slightly less formal look, men can remove their jacket at work.<sup>190</sup> In Belgrade and in other large towns, people wear trendy clothing. For



© Υπουργείο Εξωτερικών  
Meeting with Serbian official

<sup>185</sup> Travel Serbia, “Food and Drink in Serbia,” 2011, <http://www.travelserbia.com/food-and-drink-in-serbia/>  
<sup>186</sup> Christopher Deliso, *Culture and Customs of Serbia and Montenegro* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2009), 84–95.  
<sup>187</sup> Barbara Rolek, “Krsna Slava: Serbian Patron Saint Day,” 2011, <http://easteuropeanfood.about.com/od/holidaysfestivals/a/krsnaslava.htm>  
<sup>188</sup> Welcome to Serbia, “More About Serbia: Visiting for Slava,” 2010, [http://www.welcometoserbia.travel/about\\_serbia.php](http://www.welcometoserbia.travel/about_serbia.php)  
<sup>189</sup> Centre for Intercultural Learning, “Culture Information: Serbia,” 15 October 2009, <http://www.intercultures.ca/cil-cai/ci-ic-eng.asp?iso=yu#cn-4>  
<sup>190</sup> London Chamber, “Serbia: Business Culture,” March 2010, <http://www.londonchamber.co.uk/docimages/6663.pdf>

formal events, they often wear designer styles, according to their financial means.<sup>191</sup>

**Exchange 15: Is this acceptable to wear?**

Soldier:	Is this acceptable to wear?	daa lee ye ovo dozvoljeno daa se nosee?
Local:	Yes.	daa

For everyday, casual wear, Serbs both in the city and countryside wear jeans, shirts, T-shirts, and sweaters. They wear tennis shoes or casual leather shoes.

Traditionally, Serbs wore clothing that was colorful and richly decorated by hand. Women’s clothing often included embroidered folk designs or flowers. Linen, velvet, or wool fabric, with colorful embroidery, including silver or gold thread was used. Men wore wool jackets and pants and linen shirts. The fabrics were handwoven, and the garments were handmade. Today, traditional clothing is rarely seen except during holiday folk celebrations.<sup>192, 193, 194</sup>



© Margita Perecca  
New Year's celebration,  
Belgrade

**Nonreligious Holidays and Celebrations**

*New Year*

New Year celebrations take place over a two-day period. New Year’s Day is 1 January and 2 January is the national holiday. In Serbia, the New Year is ushered in with widespread celebrating.<sup>195, 196</sup>

<sup>191</sup> Serbian Apparel, “Profile of Zekstra Grupa: Zekstra d.o.o,” 2006, <http://www.serbianapparel.com/manufacturing/companies/zekstra.jsp>

<sup>192</sup> Everyculture.com, “Serbian Americans: Traditional Dress,” 2011, <http://www.everyculture.com/multi/Pa-Sp/Serbian-Americans.html>

<sup>193</sup> Maps of World, “Serbia National Costume,” 2009, <http://www.mapsofworld.com/serbia/people-culture-festivals/national-costume.html>

<sup>194</sup> Christopher Deliso, *Culture and Customs of Serbia and Montenegro* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2009), 95–98.

<sup>195</sup> World Travel Guide, “Serbia Public Holidays,” 2009, [http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/323/public\\_holidays/Europe/Serbia.html](http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/323/public_holidays/Europe/Serbia.html)

<sup>196</sup> Embassy of the United States, “Serbia – U.S. Embassy Holidays 2009,” n.d., <http://belgrade.usembassy.gov/contact.html>

## Exchange 16: Will you be celebrating Prvi Maj?

Soldier:	Will you be celebrating Prvi Maj?	daa lee tyete pRoslaveetee pRvee maay?
Local:	Yes!	daa!

### *Serbian Statehood Day*

A Constitution Day holiday was formerly held in April, but the date changed after Serbia and Montenegro separated. Observation of this public holiday takes place on 15 February. It was formerly known as “National Day” in Serbia.<sup>197, 198, 199</sup>

### *Labor Days*

Labor Day, a national holiday in Serbia, falls on 1 and 2 May. It honors the working class worldwide.<sup>200, 201</sup>

### *Victory Day*

Victory Day, held on 9 May, is a working holiday. Most workplaces remain operational and it is celebrated with military displays. This holiday commemorates the day Nazi Germany was defeated in World War II.<sup>202, 203, 204</sup>

### *St Vitus Day*

St. Vitus Day is a working holiday that falls on 28 June. It commemorates the anniversary of the historic Battle of Kosovo (1389), when the Serbian empire collapsed under the Ottoman Turk invasion. The battle is enshrined in myth and legend by Serbian

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<sup>197</sup> Christopher Deliso, *Culture and Customs of Serbia and Montenegro* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2009), 67–68.

<sup>198</sup> World Travel Guide, “Serbia Public Holidays,” 2009, [http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/323/public\\_holidays/Europe/Serbia.html](http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/323/public_holidays/Europe/Serbia.html)

<sup>199</sup> Embassy of the United States, “Serbia – U.S. Embassy Holidays 2009,” n.d., <http://belgrade.usembassy.gov/contact.html>

<sup>200</sup> Suite101.com, “What Is Labor Day and What Does It Mean?,” 21 August 2009, [http://americanhistory.suite101.com/article.cfm/what\\_is\\_labor\\_day\\_and\\_what\\_does\\_it\\_mean](http://americanhistory.suite101.com/article.cfm/what_is_labor_day_and_what_does_it_mean)

<sup>201</sup> World Travel Guide, “Serbia Public Holidays,” 2009, [http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/323/public\\_holidays/Europe/Serbia.html](http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/323/public_holidays/Europe/Serbia.html)

<sup>202</sup> B92, “Serbia Celebrates Europe and Victory Day,” 9 May 2009, [http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2009&mm=05&dd=09&nav\\_id=59026](http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2009&mm=05&dd=09&nav_id=59026)

<sup>203</sup> BBC News, “In Pictures: Victory Day,” 9 May 2009, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in\\_pictures/8041866.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_pictures/8041866.stm)

<sup>204</sup> World Travel Guide, “Serbia Public Holidays,” 2009, [http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/323/public\\_holidays/Europe/Serbia.html](http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/323/public_holidays/Europe/Serbia.html)

historians, writers, and political leaders as well as by the Serbian Orthodox Church. St. Vitus Day (called *Vidovdan*) appeals to the Serbian sense of nationalism.<sup>205, 206</sup>

## Social Events

### Weddings

All couples, regardless of faith, must first be legally married in a civil ceremony. Any religious ceremony occurs afterward. Serbian Orthodox wedding traditions vary, depending on the region and the degree to which old customs have been replaced by contemporary ones. Modern traditions in Serbia today are frequently linked to the traditions practiced in Western Europe.<sup>207</sup>



© Thomas Zemen / flickr.com  
Bride, Belgrade

One traditional custom begins on the eve of the wedding. Members of the bridal party create corsages of rosemary.<sup>208</sup> The next day the rosemary corsages are sold to wedding guests. The money from the sale is given to the bride and groom as a wedding gift.<sup>209</sup>

Traditionally the bride was not allowed to leave home until her “bride price” was successfully negotiated between the groom’s brother and the bride’s father or brother. Today this custom is recognized only as a ceremonial act meant to honor tradition.<sup>210, 211</sup> It is customary to drink a toast to the bride and groom.

### Exchange 17: Congratulations on your wedding!

Soldier:	Congratulations on your wedding!	chesteetam vam na venchanyoo!
Local:	Thank you for coming.	hvaalaa shto ste doshlee

<sup>205</sup> Dimitrije Djordjevic, “The Role of St. Vitus’ Day in Modern Serbia,” *Srpska-mreza.com*, n.d., <http://www.srpska-mreza.com/bookstore/kosovo/kosovo18.htm>

<sup>206</sup> Nebojsa Malic, “On St. Vitus Day,” 28 June 2002, <http://www.antiwar.com/malic/m062802.html>

<sup>207</sup> Christopher Deliso, *Culture and Customs of Serbia and Montenegro* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2009), 46–48.

<sup>208</sup> Umiacs.umd.edu, “Religious and Holyday Foods: Wedding,” n.d., [http://www.umiacs.umd.edu/users/lpv/YU/HTML/food\\_religious.html](http://www.umiacs.umd.edu/users/lpv/YU/HTML/food_religious.html)

<sup>209</sup> Christopher Deliso, *Culture and Customs of Serbia and Montenegro* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2009), 46–48.

<sup>210</sup> American for Hire, “Serbian Wedding, Part II: The Bride’s House,” 5 June 2006, [http://americanforhire.blogspot.com/2006/06/serbian-wedding-part-ii-brides-house\\_18.html](http://americanforhire.blogspot.com/2006/06/serbian-wedding-part-ii-brides-house_18.html)

<sup>211</sup> Triptych Tri-College Digital Library, “Serbian Wedding, Milwaukee, WI, 1992,” 1992, [http://triptych.brynmawr.edu/cdm4/item\\_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/BMC\\_Weddings&CISOPTR=261&CISOBOX=1&REC=4](http://triptych.brynmawr.edu/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/BMC_Weddings&CISOPTR=261&CISOBOX=1&REC=4)

An Orthodox ceremony will include choir music, often sung by members of the wedding party. The couple exchanges vows before a priest, who gives a short sermon and questions both parties about whether they are entering the marriage of their own free will. Additional ceremonial rites include the priest placing crowns on the bride's and groom's heads, offering them a sip of ceremonial wine, and leading them around an altar table three times.<sup>212, 213</sup>

Guests receive and congratulate the newlyweds as they depart the church, and all may join in a circle dance, called the *kolo*.<sup>214, 215</sup> A reception is held following the wedding. Family members, friends, and guests celebrate with food and drink. Attendees offer toasts to the newlyweds and dance to live music.<sup>216</sup>

**Exchange 18: I wish you both happiness.**

Soldier:	I wish you both happiness.	zheleem vam oboma sRetyoo
Local:	Thank you.	hvaalaa

Money is often the preferred gift, which helps the married couple begin their new life together.

*Funerals*

In Serbia, burial is arranged no later than 72 hours and no earlier than 24 hours after death. Embalming and cremation are available only in large cities such as Belgrade and Novi Sad and are relatively unconventional.<sup>217</sup> More common among Serbs is an Orthodox Christian burial. A funeral service takes place either at the home of a family member or friend, or at a mortuary. The body rests in a casket, which is covered with either a cross or a religious icon.<sup>218</sup>

<sup>212</sup> Weddingbee, "Honoring Our Heritage," 8 October 2009, <http://www.weddingbee.com/author/parfait/>

<sup>213</sup> Umiacs.umd.edu, "Religious and Holyday Foods: Wedding," n.d., [http://www.umiacs.umd.edu/users/lpv/YU/HTML/food\\_religious.html](http://www.umiacs.umd.edu/users/lpv/YU/HTML/food_religious.html)

<sup>214</sup> Umiacs.umd.edu, "Religious and Holyday Foods: Wedding," n.d., [http://www.umiacs.umd.edu/users/lpv/YU/HTML/food\\_religious.html](http://www.umiacs.umd.edu/users/lpv/YU/HTML/food_religious.html)

<sup>215</sup> Serbian History 101, "Serbian Wedding," 26 December 2009, [http://74.125.155.132/search?q=cache:2AV\\_3-Az4d4J:www.babamim.com/serbian\\_wedding+serbian+wedding+traditions+customs+OR+traditions+%22serbian+wedding%22&cd=5&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us](http://74.125.155.132/search?q=cache:2AV_3-Az4d4J:www.babamim.com/serbian_wedding+serbian+wedding+traditions+customs+OR+traditions+%22serbian+wedding%22&cd=5&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us)

<sup>216</sup> American for Hire, "Serbian Wedding, Part I: The Groom's House," 5 June 2006, <http://americanforhire.blogspot.com/2006/06/serbian-wedding-part-i-grooms-house.html>

<sup>217</sup> Embassy of the United States, Serbia, "Death of American Citizen in Serbia," 1 April 2011, <http://serbia.usembassy.gov/death.html>

<sup>218</sup> Funeralwise.com, "Funeral Customs – Christian Orthodox," 2009, [http://www.funeralwise.com/customs/christ\\_orthodox](http://www.funeralwise.com/customs/christ_orthodox)

During this period visitors come to the home to offer their condolences.<sup>219</sup>

**Exchange 19: I would like to give my condolences.**

Soldier:	I would like to give my condolences to you and your family.	zheleem daa eezRazeem saoocheshtye vama ee vashoy poRodeetsee
Local:	Thank you.	hvaalaa

At the funeral services in an Orthodox church, priests or laypeople sing the Orthodox liturgies. Family members and friends come to the cemetery, where the priest delivers the final liturgy. At the gravesite, men may circulate through the crowd offering a shot of brandy “for the ache” and a spoonful of honey as a “reminder that life is sweet.”<sup>220</sup>

Before they leave the cemetery, those who have attended wish the family well.

**Exchange 20: Be strong.**

Soldier:	Be strong.	boodee yaak
Local:	I’ll try. (usually they return a nod)	pokooshatyoo

Funerals in Serbia may be celebrated differently depending on the family’s religious preferences and financial means. Some people, for instance, can afford an elaborate casket and flowers for the funeral service, while others cannot. Regional and ethnic differences also determine the actual funeral rites and how they are organized.

<sup>219</sup> Funeralwise.com, “Funeral Customs – Christian Orthodox,” 2009, [http://www.funeralwise.com/customs/christ\\_orthodox](http://www.funeralwise.com/customs/christ_orthodox)

<sup>220</sup> Catherine Rankovic, “Reflections of a Serbian-American,” BNET, June 1999, [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m1295/is\\_6\\_63/ai\\_54727682/pg\\_2/](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1295/is_6_63/ai_54727682/pg_2/)

## **Dos and Don'ts**

**Do** remove your hat when entering a Serbian Orthodox Church.

**Do** remove your shoes before you enter a mosque.

**Do not** criticize or show any disrespect to Serbian officials, citizens, or their country.

**Do not** take photographs of police or military installations.

**Do not** engage in political discussions about Kosovo. It is an extremely sensitive topic.

**Do not** stare at or engage in overt expressions of affection with the opposite sex.

**Do not** point to anybody with a finger. Use the entire *right* hand instead.

**Do not** point upward with the middle finger. It is obscene in the U.S. and equally so in Serbia.

**Do not** use obscene or indecent language within earshot of Serbs. Many may know American slang.

## Chapter 3 Assessment

1. In Serbian culture, individualism is highly valued.

**False**

The value that best represents the Serbian population is collectivism, or a strong sense of national unity that extends from families to communities to political groups. The emphasis on the collective extends to building relationships and conducting business.

2. Visitors to Serbia should avoid politically sensitive topics.

**True**

Visitors to Serbia should avoid topics such as the NATO bombings or the status of Kosovo. The best policy when greeting or conversing with Serbs is to remain open-minded and friendly, keeping the conversation light. Be well-informed about past and current events and offer opinions only when asked.

3. In conversation, Serbs tend to be very direct and open.

**True**

Serbs tend to be direct and open. It may be common for someone to ask a question that could be interpreted as overly personal in the U.S. Visitors should be careful not to overreact if a Serbian person asks about their personal tastes and their personal life.

4. Eye contact is valued in greetings and all social situations.

**True**

Maintaining direct eye contact is a way of promoting trust and strengthening social ties. In fact, to either break eye contact or avoid looking into another's eyes can be misunderstood as disrespect or weakness.

5. Victory Day is a working holiday in Serbia.

**True**

Victory Day, held on 9 May, is a working holiday. In Serbia, it is celebrated with military displays. This holiday commemorates the day Nazi Germany was defeated in World War II.

## Chapter 4 Urban Life

### History of Urbanization

Serbian cities began to grow markedly while Serbia was part of the nation of Yugoslavia.<sup>221</sup> (Serbia was the dominant partner in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, which changed its name to Yugoslavia in 1929).<sup>222</sup> At the end of World War II, close to 80% of the people in Yugoslavia lived in rural villages. Migration to urban areas increased over the next 25 years.



© whl.travel / flickr.com  
Belgrade, Serbia

During this time period, around 4.6 million people had migrated to urban areas. Much of this population shift stemmed from Yugoslavia's transformation into a socialist state at the end of World War II. Between 1953 and 1971, the rate of migration increased and urban populations in Yugoslavia grew by 80%.<sup>223, 224</sup> By 2010, Serbia's urban population was estimated at 56% of the country's total.<sup>225</sup> Because of this intense growth and the need for postwar reconstruction, city planning was minimal and a housing shortage developed.<sup>226</sup> Unplanned settlements and shantytowns without running water, sewage services, or paved streets began to appear around the outskirts of the cities.<sup>227</sup> This was a continuing problem with the arrival of more migrants from rural areas to cities.

Other problems associated with rapid urban growth included rising drug use and emerging drug trafficking from Middle Eastern sources into Western Europe. This major problem has persisted into the 21st century. Although the Serbian government has passed legislation in recent years to address this illegal activity, it lacks an effective national

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<sup>221</sup> Charles Sudetic, "Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment: Urbanization and Housing," in *A Country Study: Yugoslavia (Former)*, Glenn E Curtis, ed. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Library of Congress, 1990), <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/yutoc.html>

<sup>222</sup> Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Serbia—People and History," 29 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5388.htm>

<sup>223</sup> Charles Sudetic, "Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment: Urbanization and Housing," in *A Country Study: Yugoslavia (Former)*, Glenn E Curtis, ed. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Library of Congress, 1990), <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/yutoc.html>

<sup>224</sup> Laurence Mitchell, *Bradt Travel Guide Serbia*, 2nd ed. (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2007), 94.

<sup>225</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, "Serbia: People," in *The World Factbook*, 28 April 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ri.html>

<sup>226</sup> Branka Tošić, "System of Centers: The City of Belgrade and Territorial Organization of Serbia" (paper, University of Belgrade, 31 December 2009), [http://www.ff.uni-lj.si/oddelki/geo/publikacije/dela/files/dela\\_31/04\\_tosic.pdf](http://www.ff.uni-lj.si/oddelki/geo/publikacije/dela/files/dela_31/04_tosic.pdf)

<sup>227</sup> Charles Sudetic, "Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment: Urbanization and Housing: Urban Problems," in *A Country Study: Yugoslavia (Former)*, Glenn E Curtis, ed. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Library of Congress, 1990), <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/yutoc.html>

strategy to control drug trafficking. Drug production and transit take place in the nation's cities (as well as in the countryside), much of it in and around Belgrade.<sup>228, 229</sup>

## Work Problems in Urban Areas

economic downturn in 2008, the unemployment rate has remained high in Serbian cities—reaching 26.7% at the end of 2010. In some cities the unemployment rates are as high as 30% or more among women and minorities.<sup>230, 231</sup> Cities in Serbia are struggling to create jobs and stimulate the economy while needing to raise revenue to address deficits in urban infrastructure.<sup>232</sup>



© Sarah Kanouse  
Roma house

In addition to the global economic crisis, urban workers are confronted with problems linked to the privatization of Serbian industries. The former worker-owned and state-owned public enterprises go through a downsizing before they are offered for sale to result of this privatization process. In companies that privatized according to the 2001 privatization law, employment dropped by 45% within 2 years of sale. Companies that privatized according to the 2003 law experienced job losses of 15% within 1 year.<sup>233</sup> Though Serbia's 2001 labor law protects workers by establishing working hours, paid leave, and overtime rights, it does not protect workers from termination.<sup>234</sup> The majority of those who lost their positions were not able to find new jobs after a year or more. Wages have remained low, plans are in place to freeze salaries of public and state employees, and pension benefits have been frozen. Prices for food and daily living necessities, inflation, and the cost of bank loans have increased, making it more difficult to live.<sup>235, 236, 237</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, "Country Overview: Serbia: Drug Markets and Drug-Related Offences," 11 December 2009, <http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/country-overviews/rs#gps>

<sup>229</sup> Overseas Security Advisory Council, U.S. Department of State, "Serbia 2011 Crime and Safety Report," 28 February 2011, <https://www.osac.gov/Pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=10532>

<sup>230</sup> Biljana Pekusic, "Serbia's Economy Caught in a Bind," SETimes.com, 7 February 2011, [http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en\\_GB/features/setimes/features/2011/02/07/feature-02](http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2011/02/07/feature-02)

<sup>231</sup> Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Serbia," 29 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5388.htm>

<sup>232</sup> Anthony Levitas, "Local Government Revenue, Land Use, and Economic Development Policies in Serbia: The Case of Nis: (working paper, IDG, 2009), <http://www.urban.org/publications/411885.html>

<sup>233</sup> Gregory Elich, "Devastating 'Free Market' Reforms Imposed on Serbia," GlobalResearch.ca, 28 October 2009, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=15849>

<sup>234</sup> Serbian Unity Congress, "The New Serbian Labor Law," 1996–2008, <http://www.serbianunity.net/projects/Economy/documents/labor.html>

<sup>235</sup> Gregory Elich, "Devastating 'Free Market' Reforms Imposed on Serbia," GlobalResearch.ca, 28 October 2009, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=15849>

<sup>236</sup> BBC News, "Serbia's Past Helps Ease the Present," 16 July 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/8149723.stm>

Public sector workers have initiated a number of strikes around the country. The government resisted raising wages saying that it would add to the already crippling rate of inflation.<sup>238</sup> Industrial jobs, the mainstay of the nation's economy, are found primarily in the cities. Most manufacturing sites are around Belgrade where there is a well-developed labor infrastructure and workforce. Other industrial sites are concentrated along the Western Morava River, between Uzice and Niš. The Fiat automobile plant is located in central Serbia in the city of Kragujevac.<sup>239</sup>

### *The Urban Roma Population*

Much of the high unemployment in the cities exists among Serbia's Roma population.<sup>240</sup> During the Kosovo conflict in 1999, the Roma fled to Western Europe. But after the war they began returning to Serbia. Back in Serbia, as internally displaced persons (IDP), they lack identification documentation. Having no papers, they are not eligible to receive health or social services, nor can they register for work and job training or enroll their children in school. Unable to hold jobs in the formal sector, they live in illegal settlements in Serbia in the "informal sector." Their housing is substandard (in many instances they are homeless), and they lack basic infrastructure, such as sewage or water services and electricity. In Belgrade, they survive economically by "collecting and recycling scrap material from downtown business areas (In 2007, approximately 20% of Roma aged 35–44 were employed full-time, compared to 60% of Serbians)."<sup>241</sup> However, in 2010, 75% of the Roma IDP population was defined to be in need. This number is much higher than among other groups of IDPs (75% vs. 42%).<sup>242</sup>

### **Urban Healthcare**

The medical infrastructure has improved, but poor nutrition, overcrowded living conditions, and insufficient sanitation are common throughout Serbia.<sup>243</sup> Public healthcare is available to all residents and, for those who can



© rudlavibizon / flickr.com  
Hospital hall, Belgrade

<sup>237</sup> Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Serbia," 29 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5388.htm>

<sup>238</sup> Biljana Pekusic, "Serbia's Economy Caught in a Bind," SETimes.com, 7 February 2011, [http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en\\_GB/features/setimes/features/2011/02/07/feature-02](http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2011/02/07/feature-02)

<sup>239</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Serbia: Economy—Manufacturing," 2011, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-42936>

<sup>240</sup> The Roma are a people whose ancestry has been traced from centuries ago in India and who have now dispersed throughout Europe. They speak Romani, which does not have a written system, and live a lifestyle and culture that is uniquely their own. Typically, the Roma people (often erroneously called "Gypsies") are ostracized by whichever communities of people they live among.

<sup>241</sup> The German Marshall Fund of the United States, "Case Study: Roma Resettlement Project (Belgrade, Serbia)," 2010, [http://209.200.80.89/template/page.cfm?page\\_id=513](http://209.200.80.89/template/page.cfm?page_id=513)

<sup>242</sup> Joint IDP Profiling Service, "Serbia IDP Profiling Report," 18 January 2011, <http://www.idp-profiling.org/serbia-idp-profiling-report.html>

<sup>243</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Serbia: Government and Society—Health and Welfare," 2011, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-42945>

afford it, there is a private option.<sup>244</sup> All employed persons must pay into the Compulsory Social Health Insurance fund. Unemployed people, pensioners, people with long-term illnesses, and those on maternity leave are exempt from payments.<sup>245</sup>

**Exchange 21: Do you know what is wrong?**

Soldier:	Do you know what is wrong?	daa lee znate shta neeye oo Redoo?
Local:	No, only that my stomach hurts.	ne, saamo daa me bole stomaak

The state fund covers most routine medical services, services by specialists, hospitalization, prescriptions, pregnancy, and rehabilitation.<sup>246</sup> Doctors routinely solicit bribes, even for the most basic procedures.<sup>247</sup>

The major hospitals in Serbia are located in Belgrade. Three of them offer specialty care. Clinics, public health institutes, and pharmacies can also be found in Belgrade.<sup>248</sup> Hospital efficiency is reduced by a lack of infrastructure, equipment, poor hygiene, and medical supplies.<sup>249, 250</sup>

**Exchange 22: Is there a hospital nearby?**

Soldier:	Is there a hospital nearby?	postoyee lee bolneetsa oo bleezeenee?
Local:	Yes, in the center of town.	daa, oo tsentRoo gRada

<sup>244</sup> Europe Cities, “Serbia: Healthcare in Serbia,” 2011, <http://www.europe-cities.com/en/633/serbia/health/>

<sup>245</sup> Europe Cities, “Serbia: Healthcare in Serbia,” 2011, <http://www.europe-cities.com/en/633/serbia/health/>

<sup>246</sup> Europe Cities, “Healthcare in Serbia,” 2011, <http://www.europe-cities.com/en/633/serbia/health/>

<sup>247</sup> Boris Babic, “Serbia’s Low-Cost Health-Care System Breed Corruption,” 10 February 2011, [http://www.monstersandcritics.com/news/health/features/article\\_1618449.php/Serbia-s-low-cost-health-care-system-breeds-corruption-News-Feature](http://www.monstersandcritics.com/news/health/features/article_1618449.php/Serbia-s-low-cost-health-care-system-breeds-corruption-News-Feature)

<sup>248</sup> City of Belgrade, “Public Health,” 2010, <http://www.beograd.rs/cms/view.php?id=201512>

<sup>249</sup> Maps of World, “Serbia Hospitals,” 2009, <http://www.mapsofworld.com/serbia/health/hospitals.html>

<sup>250</sup> Travel.State.Gov, U.S. Department of State, “Serbia: Country Specific Information,” 25 April 2011, [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1014.html#medical](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1014.html#medical)

Clinics and hospitals are generally open 24 hours a day. Pharmacies in the cities are open daily.<sup>251, 252</sup> A fee is charged for medications and for most medical services, with limited exceptions.<sup>253</sup>

The City Institute of Gerontology plans and organizes medical treatment for patients confined to their homes.<sup>254</sup>

After World War II, the government began to emphasize training new doctors. By 2002, there were about 2 doctors for every 1000 residents.<sup>255</sup>

**Exchange 23: Is Dr. Jovanovich in, sir?**

Soldier:	Is Dr. Jovanovich in, sir?	daa lee ye too doktoR Jovanoveety?
Local:	No.	ne

The doctors who work in private clinics in Serbia are usually well trained. Most received their education abroad, and they often speak English. Although the level of care in private clinics is relatively high, medications may be difficult to acquire.<sup>256</sup> Visitors who depend on certain medications are advised to bring their own supply.<sup>257</sup>

**Urban Education**

In Serbia, the educational system is divided into five levels.<sup>258</sup> It begins with preschool, available for children ages 1–6. Part of this program prepares them for compulsory primary school. The lower level of primary school is for ages 7–10 and the upper level is for ages 11–14.<sup>259</sup>



© DIS-PATCH Festival / flickr.com  
Children in classroom

<sup>251</sup> National Tourism Organisation of Serbia, “Welcome to Serbia: Medical Care,” 2011, [http://www.serbia.travel/cms/item/info/en/Useful\\_facts.html](http://www.serbia.travel/cms/item/info/en/Useful_facts.html)

<sup>252</sup> City of Belgrade, “Public Health,” 2010, <http://www.beograd.rs/cms/view.php?id=201512>

<sup>253</sup> Laurence Mitchell, *Bradt Travel Guide Serbia*, 2nd ed. (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2007), 65.

<sup>254</sup> City of Belgrade, “Social Welfare,” 23 October 2007, <http://www.beograd.rs/cms/view.php?id=201520>

<sup>255</sup> NationMaster, “Health Statistics: Physicians per 1,000 People (Most Recent) by Country,” 2002, [http://www.nationmaster.com/graph/hea\\_phy\\_per\\_1000\\_peo-physicians-per-1-000-people](http://www.nationmaster.com/graph/hea_phy_per_1000_peo-physicians-per-1-000-people)

<sup>256</sup> Europe Cities, “Serbia: Healthcare in Serbia,” 2011, <http://www.europe-cities.com/en/633/serbia/health/>

<sup>257</sup> Laurence Mitchell, *Bradt Travel Guide Serbia*, 2nd ed. (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2007), 65.

<sup>258</sup> Consulate General of the Republic of Serbia - New York, “Educational System in Serbia,” 2007–2008, <http://www.serbiaconsulatenyc.com/en/obrazovanje.html>

<sup>259</sup> Christopher Deliso, *Culture and Customs of Serbia and Montenegro* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2009), 55–58.

## Exchange 24: Is there a school nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a school nearby?	postoyee lee shkola oo bleezeenee?
Local:	Yes.	daa

Upon completion of primary school, teenagers enter secondary school. Here, students may choose general education to prepare for university study, or vocational school leading to 2-year technical training programs. The secondary level continues through age 18. The next level, tertiary education, has two divisions: non-university higher education (which can include theological schools or military academies) and universities and art schools. Beyond this level is postgraduate education, which includes masters' degrees, PhD programs, and other areas of specialization.<sup>260</sup>

Serbia's universities are located in the cities. In Belgrade, there are several private colleges or schools of higher learning and two state universities. The University of Belgrade, one of the Balkans' largest universities, is also one of its oldest schools.<sup>261</sup> It was founded in 1808, known at that time as the "Great School," and reestablished as a university by a law passed in 1905.<sup>262</sup>

Serbia's present educational system developed out of the structure that existed in Yugoslavia (the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia). It has also been shaped by federal and Serbian laws passed during the 1990s. In its educational policies, Yugoslavia's communist government emphasized ending illiteracy and made significant progress in this direction. In the 21st century, the Ministry of Education in Serbia has been working to help schools foster democratic principles, using education to further the country's economic and social development. Part of this process has involved strengthening vocational and adult education to respond to the demands of the labor market.<sup>263, 264</sup>

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<sup>260</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Serbia: Government and Society—Education," 2011, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-42944>

<sup>261</sup> Christopher Deliso, *Culture and Customs of Serbia and Montenegro* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2009), 55–58.

<sup>262</sup> University of Belgrade, "The History of the University," n.d., [http://www.bg.ac.rs/eng/uni/en\\_istorijat](http://www.bg.ac.rs/eng/uni/en_istorijat).

<sup>263</sup> StateUniversity.com, "Serbia: Educational System: Overview," 2010, <http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1322/Serbia-EDUCATIONAL-SYSTEM-OVERVIEW.html>

<sup>264</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Serbia: Government and Society—Education," 2011, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-42944>

## Daily Urban Life

Serbia's largest cities, including Belgrade and Novi Sad, have a cosmopolitan environment. People visit cafes and restaurants, often dining late, similar to the custom in southern Europe.<sup>265,</sup>

<sup>266</sup> For their leisure time, they have a variety of entertainment and cultural events to choose from. People can visit galleries, attend theaters and poetry readings, and wander through museums.<sup>267</sup>

Places of interest include the National Museum, which dates back to 1844, the National Library of Serbia, the National Theater, and the Yugoslav Drama Theater. There are numerous festivals of different kinds, such as the International Competition of Music Youth, Belgrade Jazz Festival, Belgrade Book Fair, and film festivals.<sup>268, 269, 270</sup> In addition, residents can spend their afternoons visiting monuments, historical sites, parks, botanical gardens, and scenic walkways along the Danube River in Belgrade.



© Jonathan Davis  
Beggar, Belgrade

Serbs who live in the cities have a wide choice of lifestyle and sports activities. There are several fitness clubs and swimming pools in Belgrade open to the public. Competitive sports are very popular throughout the country, and people who live in Belgrade have numerous stadiums in their home city that host various types of sports competitions.<sup>271,</sup>  
<sup>272</sup>

Serbs maintain strong social ties and spend significant time socializing with relatives and friends. Urban residents take the time to keep in touch with neighbors and family members by visiting or calling frequently.

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<sup>265</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Serbia: Cultural Life—Daily Life and Social Customs," 2011, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-228350>

<sup>266</sup> World Travel Guide, "Serbia Country Guide," 2011, [http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/323/country\\_guide/Europe/Serbia.html](http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/323/country_guide/Europe/Serbia.html)

<sup>267</sup> Christopher Deliso, *Culture and Customs of Serbia and Montenegro* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2009), 61–81.

<sup>268</sup> The German Marshall Fund of the United States, "Belgrade, Serbia—Transatlantic Cities Network: Education/Culture," 2010, [http://www.gmfus.org/template/page.cfm?page\\_id=491](http://www.gmfus.org/template/page.cfm?page_id=491)

<sup>269</sup> MapsofWorld, "Belgrade," 2008, <http://www.mapsofworld.com/cities/serbia/belgrade/>

<sup>270</sup> City of Belgrade, "Culture and Art," 5 August 2010, <http://www.beograd.rs/cms/view.php?id=201038>

<sup>271</sup> City of Belgrade, "Sport and Recreation," 15 October 2010, <http://www.beograd.rs/cms/view.php?id=201508>

<sup>272</sup> Christopher Deliso, *Culture and Customs of Serbia and Montenegro* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2009), 72–81.

## Exchange 25: What is your telephone number?

Soldier:	What is your telephone number?	koyee ye tvoy bRoy telefona?
Local:	My phone number is 021 555 5555	moy bRoy ye noolaa dva yedaan pet pet pet pedeset pet pedeset pet

Serbia's telecommunications infrastructure was damaged by NATO bombing in 1999, but considerable work has since been done to privatize and expand it.<sup>273</sup> Serbia has a largely digitized modern telecommunications system although telephone service today exists mostly in the cities. Many people in urban areas rely primarily on cell phones.<sup>274, 275</sup>

Urban residents frequently use internet cafes in the cities to access e-mail to keep in touch, socially and professionally.<sup>276</sup>

## Restaurants and Marketplace

### Restaurants

Serbian cities, particularly Belgrade, have an active nightlife. A large number of restaurants, cafes, and nightclubs that serve food in Belgrade stay open late. There is a wide range of choices, including floating restaurants on the Danube and Sava rivers that flow through Belgrade. Dining out is a popular activity in Serbian cities, and people often linger over dinner for a lengthy period of time.<sup>277</sup>



© Jeff Miller  
Belgrade Café

<sup>273</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Serbia: Economy: Telecommunications," 2011, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-228335>

<sup>274</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, "Serbia: Telecommunications," in *The World Factbook*, 28 April 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ri.html>

<sup>275</sup> World Travel Guide, "Serbia Communications," 2011, <http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/323/communications/Europe/Serbia.html>

<sup>276</sup> National Tourism Organisation of Serbia, "Serbia—Useful Facts: Internet," 2011, [http://www.serbia.travel/cms/item/info/en/Useful\\_facts.html](http://www.serbia.travel/cms/item/info/en/Useful_facts.html)

<sup>277</sup> World Travel Guide, "Serbia Entertainment," 2011, <http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/323/entertainment/Europe/Serbia.html>

**Exchange 26: May I have a mineral water?**

Soldier:	May I have a mineral water?	mogoo lee daa dobeeyem meeneRaaloo vode?
Local:	Yes, right away.	daa, odmah

Serbian food has been influenced not only by Balkan neighbors, but also by the Ottoman occupation. Most restaurants offer some kind of meat or seafood, and vegetarian choices are limited. Meat dishes tend to be heavy, but are balanced by generous side servings of vegetables in salads and soups.<sup>278</sup>

**Exchange 27: I'd like soup.**

Soldier:	I'd like soup.	zhelelaa beeh soopoo
Local:	Sure.	svaakaako

**Exchange 28: What type of meat is this?**

Soldier:	What type of meat is this?	koyaa ye ovo vRstaa mesaa?
Local:	Pork.	sveenyeteenaa

International foods such as Thai, Indian, or Mexican are typically limited to restaurants in Belgrade. Italian food, however, is popular throughout Serbia, even in small towns.<sup>279</sup>

Restaurants offer a variety of drinks including coffee and several that are alcohol-based. Drinks in Serbia include *lozovaca* or *loza* (grape brandy), *šljivovica* (a strong brandy made from plums), and *maraskino* (made from morello cherries), and different kinds of wine. Turkish coffee and fruit juices are also served at most restaurants.<sup>280, 281</sup>

<sup>278</sup> Laurence Mitchell, *Bradt Travel Guide Serbia*, 2nd ed. (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2007), 76

<sup>279</sup> Laurence Mitchell. *Bradt Travel Guide Serbia*, 2nd ed. (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2007), 76.

<sup>280</sup> World Travel Guide, "Serbia Entertainment," 2011,

<http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/323/entertainment/Europe/Serbia.html>

<sup>281</sup> TravelSerbia.Info, "Food and Drink in Serbia," 2011, <http://www.travelsrbia.info/foodanddrink.php>

**Exchange 29: Coffee, please.**

Soldier:	Coffee, please.	kaafoo, moleem baas
Local:	Sure.	svaakaako

Salads and breads (sometimes spread with salted cream cheese) usually accompany main courses. Desserts such as pastries and strudel often include nuts and fruit.<sup>282</sup>

**Exchange 30: Do you have dessert?**

Soldier:	Do you have dessert?	daa lee eemate deseRt?
Local:	Yes, we have cake.	daa eemaamo toRtoo

The main daily meal is lunch. Dinner, which follows in the evening, is much lighter.<sup>283</sup>

**Exchange 31: Are you still serving breakfast?**

Soldier:	Are you still serving breakfast?	daa lee yosh oovek sloozheete doRoochak?
Local:	Yes.	daa

When dining in a restaurant with a Serbian host, the host pays. Foreign visitors are usually considered guests and it would be inappropriate to insist on paying even part of the bill.<sup>284</sup>

**Exchange 32: Bill, please!**

Soldier:	Bill, please!	Rachoon, moleem vaas!
Local:	Yes, of course.	daa, svaakaako

<sup>282</sup> TravelSerbia.Info, "Food and Drink in Serbia," 2011, <http://www.travelsrbia.info/foodanddrink.php>

<sup>283</sup> Laurence Mitchell, *Bradt Travel Guide Serbia*, 2nd ed. (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2007), 76.

<sup>284</sup> Laurence Mitchell, *Bradt Travel Guide Serbia*, 2nd ed. (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2007), 86.

Many restaurants in the cities take international credit cards except for American Express, which is less accepted. It is necessary to have cash on hand (dinars) in case other payment methods do not work.<sup>285</sup>



© Michal Sacharewicz  
Outdoor market stall

**Exchange 33: Put this all in one bill, please.**

Soldier:	Put this all in one bill, please.	staveete sve na yedan Rachoon
Local:	Okay.	oo Redoo

In Serbian restaurants, a 10% tip is expected.<sup>286</sup>

*Marketplace*

The largest outdoor markets for buying souvenirs and crafts are located in Belgrade. Here, one can purchase leather goods, books, gifts, antiques, embroidered textiles and needlework, and a variety of handicrafts.<sup>287</sup>

**Exchange 34: Do you sell Sirogojno?**

Soldier:	Do you sell Sirogojno? (hand-made sweater)	daa lee pRodayete seeRogoyno dgempeRe?
Local:	Yes.	daa

At many shops in Belgrade on the *Bulevar Kralja Aleksandra*, bargaining is expected.<sup>288</sup>,<sup>289</sup> Before bargaining, have an idea of what you consider a fair price for the item.

<sup>285</sup> World Travel Guide, “Serbia Money,” 2011, <http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/323/money/Europe/Serbia.html>

<sup>286</sup> World Travel Guide, “Serbia Entertainment,” 2011, <http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/323/entertainment/Europe/Serbia.html>

<sup>287</sup> World Travel Guide, “Serbia Entertainment,” 2011, <http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/323/entertainment/Europe/Serbia.html>

**Exchange 35: Can I buy an ikone with this much money?**

Soldier:	Can I buy an ikone with this much money? (Hand painted Orthodox Byzantine icon)	mogoo lee daa koopeem eekony saa ovoleeko novtsaa?
Local:	No.	ne

Closely examine items to be sure the quality matches the price they are willing to pay.

**Exchange 36: May I examine this close up?**

Soldier:	May I examine this close up?	mogoo lee daa pRoveReem ovo malo bleezhe?
Local:	Sure.	svakako

Snack foods are available to purchase at street stalls or small bakeries; both kinds of establishments are numerous in Belgrade. The cost of food is low, and the quality can be quite good.<sup>290</sup>

**Exchange 37: How much longer will you be here?**

Soldier:	How much longer will you be here?	koleeko tyete doogo yosh beetee ovde?
Local:	Three more hours.	tRee sata

In Belgrade, many small stores line the *Kneza Mihaila*, a popular pedestrian street and shopping area. Here, the stores typically remain open until late evening.<sup>291</sup> Many shops are also located in the large bazaar in Belgrade's fairground.<sup>292</sup>

<sup>288</sup> Belgrade Eye, "Belgrade Shopping: Belgrade Dirt Cheap Shopping," 2011, <http://www.belgradeeye.com/shopping.html>

<sup>289</sup> Belgrade by BelgradeNet.com, "Shopping Areas," 2011, <http://www.belgradenet.com/shopping.html>

<sup>290</sup> Laurence Mitchell, *Bradt Travel Guide Serbia*, 2nd ed. (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2007), 77, 120–121.

<sup>291</sup> World Travel Guide, "Serbia Entertainment," 2011, <http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/323/entertainment/Europe/Serbia.html>

**Exchange 38: Is the market nearby?**

Soldier:	Is the market nearby?	daa lee ye peeyatsa oo bleezeenee?
Local:	Yes, over there on the right.	daa, tamo na desno

Payment must be made either in the local currency (dinars) or with credit cards. Visa and MasterCard are widely accepted. Credit cards can be used to withdraw cash at ATM machines located in the shopping areas. International bank cards can be used to make transactions at ATMs. Several change machines are available in Belgrade to exchange euros, U.S. dollars, and pounds sterling into Serbian dinars.<sup>293</sup>

**Exchange 39: Do you accept dollars?**

Soldier:	Do you accept dollars?	daa lee pReehvataate dolaaRe?
Local:	No, only dinars.	ne, samo deenaRe

At small shops in the marketplace, purchases cannot be made with personal checks or traveler's checks.<sup>294</sup>

**Exchange 40: Can you give me change?**

Soldier:	Can you give me change?	mozhete lee mee ooseetneetee novaats?
Local:	No.	ne

Banks or exchange offices will change money to the local currency. Exchange rates are similar at both.<sup>295</sup>

<sup>292</sup> TripAdvisor, "Belgrade Shopping," 2011, <http://www.tripadvisor.com/Travel-g294472-s405/Belgrade:Serbia:Shopping.html>

<sup>293</sup> World Travel Guide, "Serbia Money," 2011, <http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/323/money/Europe/Serbia.html>

<sup>294</sup> Laurence Mitchell, *Bradt Travel Guide Serbia*, 2nd ed. (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2007), 69–70.

## Transportation and Traffic

Serbia has been slow to develop a transportation infrastructure, due to the rugged landscape and sluggish commercial development. Modern highway construction began after World War II with additional improvements in the 1960s. Over the years the roads have been more developed in the northern part of the country. Approximately half of all roads are paved.<sup>296, 297</sup>



© Pray4Serbia / flickr.com  
Bus stop

### Exchange 41: Which road leads to the airport?

Soldier:	Which road leads to the airport?	koyee poot vodee do aeRodRoma?
Local:	The road heading east.	poot pRema eestokoo

Many people in Serbia own cars, and the main highways are in reasonably good repair. Roads are poorly marked, however, and driving habits are erratic, leading to many accidents. Also, gas shortages are common and finding an open station with gas can be difficult.<sup>298, 299</sup>

### Exchange 42: Is there a gas station nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a gas station nearby?	daa lee ye benzeenska poompa tamo oo bleezeenee?
Local:	Yes.	daa

In Belgrade and Novi Sad, it is easy to find car rental agencies. Parking can be difficult because there are few garages or guarded parking lots available.<sup>300, 301</sup>

<sup>295</sup> Laurence Mitchell, *Bradt Travel Guide Serbia*, 2nd ed. (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2007), 70.

<sup>296</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Serbia: Economy: Transportation,” 2011, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-228334>

<sup>297</sup> Laurence Mitchell, *Bradt Travel Guide Serbia*, 2nd ed. (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2007), 73.

<sup>298</sup> TravelSerbia.Info, “Getting Around in Serbia: Roads,” 2011, <http://www.travelsrbia.info/travel.php>

<sup>299</sup> Laurence Mitchell, *Bradt Travel Guide Serbia*, 2nd ed. (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2007), 72–73.

<sup>300</sup> TravelSerbia.Info, “Getting Around in Serbia: Roads,” 2011, <http://www.travelsrbia.info/travel.php>

**Exchange 43: Where can I rent a car?**

Soldier:	Where can I rent a car?	gde mogoo daa eeznaymeem aoto?
Local:	Downtown.	oo gRadoo

Metered taxis operate in the cities. In Belgrade, passengers can flag taxis night or day.<sup>302</sup>  
<sup>303</sup> Visitors should only use officially marked taxis. Arranging a cab can be cheaper than hailing one on the street.<sup>304, 305</sup>

**Exchange 44: Where can I get a cab?**

Soldier:	Where can I get a cab?	gde mogoo naRoocheetee taksee?
Local:	Over there.	tamo

**Exchange 45: Can you take me there for this much?**

Soldier:	Can you take me there for this much?	mozhete lee me povestee zaa ovoleeko novtsaa?
Local:	Yes, I can.	daa, mogoo

Bus service is popular and reliable within and between the cities. Although buses are sometimes crowded and hot in the summer, it is a comfortable way to travel. Buy tickets in advance of traveling or directly from the driver if seats are vacant. From Belgrade,

<sup>301</sup> Laurence Mitchell, *Bradt Travel Guide Serbia*, 2nd ed. (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2007), 72–73.

<sup>302</sup> World Travel Guide, “Serbia Transport,” 2011, [http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/323/internal\\_travel/Europe/Serbia.html](http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/323/internal_travel/Europe/Serbia.html)

<sup>303</sup> TravelSerbia.Info, “Getting Around in Serbia: Taxi Services,” 2011, <http://www.travelsrbia.info/travel.php>

<sup>304</sup> TravelSerbia.Info, “Getting Around in Serbia: Taxi Services,” 2011, <http://www.travelsrbia.info/travel.php>

<sup>305</sup> TravelSerbia.Info, “Getting Around in Serbia: Taxi Services,” 2011, <http://www.travelsrbia.info/travel.php>

buses travel to a large number of cities in the country. Bus stations are located throughout Serbia, even in small towns.<sup>306, 307</sup>

**Exchange 46: Will the bus be here soon?**

Soldier:	Will the bus be here soon?	daa lee tye aootoboos bRzo steetyee?
Local:	No, it's always late.	ne, oovek kaasnee

Trolleys and trams are part of Belgrade's extensive public transportation system. With all these choices, traveling between the city center and the suburbs can be easy.<sup>308</sup>

Railway service in Serbia is considered substandard and generally unreliable. Trains are often overbooked. Be aware that the safety record is poor and service is slow, with trains known to run late. Intercity trains run regularly, but they are often extremely crowded. Reservations do not guarantee a seat during holidays or other times when trains are overfilled.<sup>309, 310, 311</sup>

**Exchange 47: Is there a train station nearby?**

Soldier:	Is there a train station nearby?	daa lee ye zhelezneechka staneetsa oo bleezeenee?
Local:	No.	ne

For international travel, trains can be a good option. Sleeper cars are available. Reduced price rail passes are available for those under the age of 26. Children's railway fares are also reduced to approximately half the full price.<sup>312, 313</sup>

<sup>306</sup> World Travel Guide, "Serbia Transport," 2011,

[http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/323/internal\\_travel/Europe/Serbia.html](http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/323/internal_travel/Europe/Serbia.html)

<sup>307</sup> Laurence Mitchell, *Bradt Travel Guide Serbia*, 2nd ed. (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2007), 71.

<sup>308</sup> Maps of World, "Belgrade: Transportation," 2008, <http://www.mapsofworld.com/cities/serbia/belgrade/>

<sup>309</sup> Laurence Mitchell, *Bradt Travel Guide Serbia*, 2nd ed. (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2007), 72.

<sup>310</sup> World Travel Guide, "Serbia Transport," 2011,

[http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/323/internal\\_travel/Europe/Serbia.html](http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/323/internal_travel/Europe/Serbia.html)

<sup>311</sup> TravelSerbia.Info, "Serbian Railway Network," 2011, <http://www.travelsrbia.info/railway.php>

<sup>312</sup> World Travel Guide, "Serbia Transport," 2011,

[http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/323/internal\\_travel/Europe/Serbia.html](http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/323/internal_travel/Europe/Serbia.html)

<sup>313</sup> Laurence Mitchell, *Bradt Travel Guide Serbia*, 2nd ed. (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2007), 72.

## Street Crime and Solicitations

There is a large number of beggars, including Roma people, in Serbia's cities. They move to cities from poor, rural areas in search of jobs, and often end up begging when they cannot find work. Most are homeless and live on the streets, or find shelter in small shanty dwellings. Some of these homeless ride the tram that circles the inner city because it does not stop until late in the evening. Children are often forced into begging by their families who cannot support them.<sup>314, 315</sup> Beggars also include disabled adults, among them veterans from the civil war with Bosnia and other conflicts of the 1990s.

Many beggars will attempt to make visitors feel guilty for not giving money. But it is generally best to ignore beggars, especially if others are around.

### Exchange 48: Give me money to feed my children.

Local:	God help you! I'm so poor, give me money to feed my children.	bog baam pomoago! seeRomaashnaa saam daayte mee paaRaa daa ahRaaneem detsoo
Soldier:	I don't have any.	nemam gaa

If someone insists on making an unwanted advance or sale, you should directly decline the offer. The best interaction can be to simply say "I'm sorry" or "I have no money" and keep walking.

### Exchange 49: Please, buy something from me.

Local:	Please, buy something from me.	moleem vas, koopeete neshto od mene
Soldier:	Sorry, I have no money left.	eezveeneete, neeye mee ostalo novtsa

In Serbian cities, the rate of street crime is relatively low. Thieves who resort to pickpocketing or stealing purses can be a problem in some areas of Belgrade. Packages left in unattended vehicles are an invitation to thieves, who may break in and steal anything, including the vehicle itself. Organized crime can be a problem in the cities,

<sup>314</sup> Topix.com, "Kosovo Expels Roma Child Beggars," 9 February 2009, <http://www.topix.com/forum/world/serbia/T320OJTNELR6P2PC9>

<sup>315</sup> Rasid Kurtic, "Children Trafficking in Serbia: Aleksinac: Stating the Obvious," American Council for Kosova, 30 August 2006, <http://www.savekosova.org/deceit=news=18.htm>

with rival gangs fighting each other, often with weapons or even bombs. Much of the crime is related to the ongoing conflict between Serbia and Kosovo, which seceded from Serbia in 2008.<sup>316, 317</sup>

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<sup>316</sup> Overseas Security Advisory Council, U.S. Department of State, “Serbia 2011 Crime and Safety Report,” 28 February 2011, <https://www.osac.gov/Pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=10532>

<sup>317</sup> Virtual Tourist, “Belgrade Warnings or Dangers,” 2009, [http://www.virtualtourist.com/travel/Europe/Republic\\_of\\_Serbia/Belgrade-723780/Warnings\\_or\\_Dangers-Belgrade-BR-1.html](http://www.virtualtourist.com/travel/Europe/Republic_of_Serbia/Belgrade-723780/Warnings_or_Dangers-Belgrade-BR-1.html)

## Chapter 4 Assessment

1. Growth in Serbian cities was not significant until Yugoslavia broke apart.  
**False**  
Serbian cities began to grow markedly while Serbia was part of the nation of Yugoslavia. At the end of World War II, close to 80% of the people in Yugoslavia lived in rural villages.
2. Public healthcare is available for all residents in Serbia.  
**True**  
Public healthcare is available for all residents. Both employees and employers must pay into the state healthcare fund. Contributions depend on salaries. The self employed must pay the full contribution amount. Unemployed, pensioners, and people on long-term sick leave or maternity leave do not pay into the healthcare system. Private options are available for people who can afford it.
3. Secondary school in Serbia has two tracks: either general or vocational education.  
**True**  
Upon completion of primary grades, teenagers enter secondary school, and may choose general education to prepare for university study or vocational school leading to 2-year technical training programs. The secondary level continues through age 18.
4. Serbia's largest cities provide a broad and rich variety of entertainment and cultural events.  
**True**  
Serbia's largest cities, including Belgrade and Novi Sad, have a cosmopolitan environment. People who live here visit cafes and restaurants, often dining late, similar to the custom in southern Europe. Those with interests in literature, history, and the arts can visit galleries, attend theaters and poetry readings, and wander through museums.
5. Restaurants in Serbia commonly offer a wide variety of vegetarian meals.  
**False**  
Vegetarian choices are limited. Restaurants generally offer some kind of meat or seafood. Serbian food has been influenced not only by its Balkan neighbors, but also by the Ottoman occupation.

## Chapter 5 Rural Life

### Development of Agriculture

For centuries, Serbia has been a farming society. During the period of Ottoman rule, most people lived and worked on small family-owned farms, producing just enough to support themselves. Towns at that time were mainly populated by Turks involved in administrative or military work, or Greeks and other non-Serbian peoples who practiced commerce.<sup>318</sup> In the Vojvodina—northern Serbia which was influenced by the Hapsburg (Austrian) Empire—rural agricultural settlements tended to be large as a defensive measure. In the 19th and 20th centuries, as Ottoman raids declined, people in this northern region began to live in smaller individual farms located between the large farming villages.<sup>319</sup> Some farmers inherited Turkish estates and became proprietors who worked for the state, renting out land to other farmers and gaining some control over trade and credit. A middle class eventually developed in the 19th century, but overall, the country remained a peasant society.<sup>320</sup>



© Jonathan Davis  
Vojvodina farmland

During the late 19th century, an influx of migrant farmers from Austria, the Rhineland, and other parts of Serbia transformed the Vojvodina. As the population soared, land reclamation projects and railway construction attracted even more settlers, including a large number of colonists, officials, and entrepreneurs from Hungary. They commercialized many of the large estates, and the traditional farming occupations were eventually replaced by agricultural wage labor. The Vojvodina region retained its agriculturally productive character into modern times, becoming known as the “breadbasket of the empire.”<sup>321</sup>

### Rural Migration

Today in eastern rural Serbia, migration to other areas and a low birth rate have depopulated the area. Unemployment and poor infrastructure has led to poverty as well as substandard living conditions, medical services, and educational opportunities. Across the region, villages with populations around 500 have decreased by



© Nenad Stevanovic  
Older home in countryside

<sup>318</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Serbia: History: The Ottoman Period: Life Under the Turks,” 2010, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-43573>

<sup>319</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Serbia: People: Settlement Patterns: Rural Settlement,” 2010, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-228326>

<sup>320</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Serbia: History: Modern Serbia: Consolidation of the State,” 2010, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-43578>

<sup>321</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Serbia: History: Modern Serbia: The Scramble for the Balkans,” 2010, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-43579>

approximately 90%, and towns with populations around 5,000 have decreased by half.<sup>322</sup> Under the Yugoslav communist regime, populations were artificially sustained by offering better salaries in certain rural areas. Today, however, rural Serbs have little motivation to stay and are moving to urban areas in search of jobs and higher living standards.<sup>323</sup>

### Land Distribution and Ownership

In Serbia, land is divided into two categories by intended use: agriculture or construction. Individuals and public entities are allowed to own agricultural land.<sup>324</sup> Prior to the adoption of a new land law in 2006, the state owned most land parcels, in accordance with the socialist government policies of the former Yugoslavia. Individual property owners were mainly farmers who owned small parcels of land.<sup>325</sup>



© Matt and Cyndi Maxson  
Building construction

### Exchange 50: Do you own this land?

Soldier:	Do you own this land?	daa lee posedooyete owoo zemlyoo?
Local:	Yes.	daa

Complicating matters, rural land transactions were seldom legally registered. During the socialist years, records were not kept for property that belonged to the state. There are some reliable land records that date to the period of the Habsburgs (Austrian Empire), when recordkeeping was systematized. All together, these conditions have created a confused ownership situation that ultimately blocks agricultural productivity and availability of jobs in the agricultural sector. In addition, the conditions complicate plans for restitution of former property rights. (Restitution occurs when property taken through war, conflict, or socialist confiscation is returned to its original owners).<sup>326, 327, 328</sup>

<sup>322</sup> Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN), “Eastern Serbia Dies Slow Death from Depopulation,” 25 July 2007, <http://birn.eu.com/en/1/190/6868/>

<sup>323</sup> Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN), “Eastern Serbia Dies Slow Death from Depopulation,” 25 July 2007, <http://birn.eu.com/en/1/190/6868/>

<sup>324</sup> Gide Loyrette Nouel, “Real Property Investment Law in Serbia: Land,” March 2007, 3, [http://www.europe-re.com/files/00034800/GLN\\_Serbia1.pdf](http://www.europe-re.com/files/00034800/GLN_Serbia1.pdf)

<sup>325</sup> Renee Giovarelli and David Bledsoe, “Land Reform in Eastern Europe: Western CIS, Transcaucuses, Balkans, and EU Accession Countries,” FAO, October 2001, <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/007/AD878E/AD878E00.pdf>

<sup>326</sup> Vesna Peric Zimonjic, “Balkans: Serbs Bank on EU Laws to Regain Seized Property,” IPS, 29 December 2009, <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=49837>

As restitution and land privatization continue, the need for property identification and land reform is even more essential.<sup>329</sup> Some efforts have been made to reform land ownership and address these issues, but much more work is needed.

The Agricultural Land Law of 2006 prohibits foreigners from owning land designated for agricultural purposes in Serbia. However, foreigners are able to circumvent this law by establishing a local company in Serbia and purchasing land through the firm. Often, local investors purchase agricultural land and rezone it for commercial or construction purposes.<sup>330</sup>

### Typical Sources of Rural Income

Most Serbs in rural areas work as subsistence farmers. Citizens may own small farms or find employment in the agricultural sector. Paid employment typically includes working in the fields, harvesting and planting crops, or operating and repairing equipment. Many of the farmers or agricultural laborers originally lived in the countryside, but fled to the cities during the conflicts of the 1990s to work in factories. They then returned to rural Serbia when the conflicts ended. Thus, many rural workers are aging or lack experience with agrarian production, adding to the difficulty Serbia faces in rebuilding its rural workforce.<sup>331, 332</sup>



© Sida Swedish Int. Development Cooperation Agency  
Dairy Farm

Serbia's rural infrastructure is undeveloped, with run down agricultural and transportation equipment in need of repair. Resources are minimal. To help improve these conditions, farmers work through associations, networks, unions, and cooperatives to organize their work and gain information from others. Networking helps them find new links to credit and markets, enabling them also to find ways to procure the equipment and supplies they need.<sup>333, 334, 335</sup>

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<sup>327</sup> [Giovarelli](#) Renee and David Bledsoe, "Land Reform in Eastern Europe: Western CIS, Transcaucuses, Balkans, and EU Accession Countries," FAO, October 2001, <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/007/AD878E/AD878E00.pdf>

<sup>328</sup> ARCOTRASS-Consortium, European Commission, "Serbia: Country Report," December 2006, [http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/analysis/external/applicant/serbia\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/analysis/external/applicant/serbia_en.pdf)

<sup>329</sup> CELK Center, "Serbia: Report Based on Exchange Programme Documents Provided by Nebojsa Bozinovic," 2004, [http://www.4cli.org/CELK/wwwcelknew/country\\_reports/Serbia.pdf](http://www.4cli.org/CELK/wwwcelknew/country_reports/Serbia.pdf)

<sup>330</sup> Serbia Business, "Ownership and Status of Land in Republic of Serbia," n.d., [http://serbia-business.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=213:ownership-and-status-of-land-in-republic-of-serbia&catid=43:market-news-a-opportunities&Itemid=55](http://serbia-business.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=213:ownership-and-status-of-land-in-republic-of-serbia&catid=43:market-news-a-opportunities&Itemid=55)

<sup>331</sup> Alexandria Huerta, Mark Tucker, and Pamala Morris, "Serbia's Rural Labor Migration: Challenges for a Post-Conflict Transition Economy," (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Rural Sociological Society, Louisville, 10 August 2006), [http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p\\_mla\\_apa\\_research\\_citation/1/2/4/9/7/p124970\\_index.html](http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/1/2/4/9/7/p124970_index.html)

<sup>332</sup> ARCOTRASS- Consortium. "Serbia: Country Report.: December 2006. [http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/analysis/external/applicant/serbia\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/analysis/external/applicant/serbia_en.pdf)

<sup>333</sup> Serbian Government. "Agriculture." 2004. <http://www.srbija.gov.rs/pages/article.php?id=93>

## Rural Transportation

A driver in rural Serbia may encounter many dangers on the roads. In the countryside, roads are often in disrepair, marked by rocks and potholes, and road signs may be non-existent or wrong. Driving can be particularly dangerous at night because of these structural problems, which are generally worse in the southern part of the country. In addition, rural Serbian motorists are known to drive fast and recklessly, ignoring speed limits or warning signs.<sup>336, 337, 338</sup> Fog can also be a problem in winter months, causing driving to be even more hazardous.<sup>339</sup>



© Aleksander Cocek  
Train Station

Traveling by bus is a safer and more reliable than traveling by car. Buses connect most distant towns; stations with well-marked timetables are located in small towns and large metropolitan areas. Passengers can buy their tickets in the bus station, purchase snacks, and leave their luggage in designated areas.<sup>340, 341</sup>

Traveling by rail is cheaper than by bus, but railway service is prone to delays and breakdowns. Maintenance and investment in the system has been very limited. Railroads can be useful for long, overnight, scenic trips when time is not pressing. Otherwise, it is probably better to take the bus, even though rail lines link all parts of Serbia.<sup>342, 343</sup>

Travel in southern border areas is extremely dangerous. U.S. Government employees travel in fully armored vehicles. If travelling near the border, it is advisable to register with the embassy and check the most recent security updates.<sup>344</sup>

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<sup>334</sup> Huerta, Alexandria, Mark Tucker, and Pamala Morris. "Serbia's Rural Labor Migration: Challenges for a Post-Conflict Transition Economy." (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Rural Sociological Society, Louisville). 10 August 2006. Abstract.

[http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p\\_mla\\_apa\\_research\\_citation/1/2/4/9/7/p124970\\_index.html](http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/1/2/4/9/7/p124970_index.html)

<sup>335</sup> ARCOTRASS-Consortium, "Serbia: Country Report," in *Study on the State of Agriculture in Five Applicant Countries*, December 2006,

[http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/analysis/external/applicant/serbia\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/analysis/external/applicant/serbia_en.pdf)

<sup>336</sup> Travel Serbia, "Rent a Car," 2011, <http://www.travelsrbia.info/travel.php>

<sup>337</sup> World Travel Guide, "Serbia Transport: Getting Around by Road," 2011,

[http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/323/internal\\_travel/Europe/Serbia.html](http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/323/internal_travel/Europe/Serbia.html)

<sup>338</sup> Laurence Mitchell, *Bradt Travel Guide Serbia*, 2nd ed. (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2007), 72–73.

<sup>339</sup> Travel.State.Gov, U.S. Department of State, "Serbia: Traffic Safety and Road Conditions," 25 April 2011, [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1014.html#traffic\\_safety](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1014.html#traffic_safety)

<sup>340</sup> Travel Serbia, "Getting Around in Serbia," 2011, <http://www.travelsrbia.info/travel.php>

<sup>341</sup> Laurence Mitchell, *Bradt Travel Guide Serbia*, 2nd ed. (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2007), 71.

<sup>342</sup> Travel Serbia, "Serbian Railway Network," 2011, <http://www.travelsrbia.info/railway.php>

<sup>343</sup> Laurence Mitchell, *Bradt Travel Guide Serbia*, 2nd ed. (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2007), 72.

<sup>344</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Serbia: Traffic Safety and Road Conditions," 25 April 2011, [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1014.html#traffic\\_safety](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1014.html#traffic_safety)

## Rural Healthcare

Employers and employees must contribute to Serbia’s Health Insurance Fund (HIF). Many also opt to have private insurance or are required to have it (including foreigners without jobs).<sup>345</sup> Everyone is required to pay for medications from pharmacies, which generally have limited supplies.

Health standards in the northern Vojvodina region are generally better than in other parts of the country. The lowest standards are in the south. Health services are not widely available in rural areas. Although entitled to a wide range of healthcare, many people have no access to doctors or healthcare facilities.<sup>346, 347</sup>



© Pray4Serbia / flickr.com  
Health clinic

### Exchange 51: Is there a medical clinic nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a medical clinic nearby?	daa lee postoyee medeetseenska kleeneeka oo bleezeenee?
Local:	Yes, down that road.	daa, tamo

Doctors and healthcare professionals receive quality training, but the standard of service tends to be low. Many facilities and medical equipment have never been upgraded and remain “in bad condition.”<sup>348</sup> The shortage is particularly severe in rural areas. Hospitals are found only in major cities, and rural clinics are often underequipped and understaffed.

The HIF is mandated to cover many medical services, but the payment schedule is inadequate. The state often cannot cover the fees for specialists. Doctors charge “under the table” fees for their services, meaning patients with more money receive better medical care.<sup>349</sup> Costs are higher at private clinics and hospitals. Many people living in

<sup>345</sup> Europe Cities, “Serbia: Healthcare in Serbia,” 2011, <http://www.europe-cities.com/en/633/serbia/health/>

<sup>346</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Serbia: Government and Society: Health and Welfare,” 2010, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-42945>

<sup>347</sup> Dejan Drobnjak, “Germany & World Vision Partner to Help Serbia’s Children with Disabilities,” *World Vision*, 17 February 2009, [http://meero.worldvision.org/news\\_article.php?newsID=1767](http://meero.worldvision.org/news_article.php?newsID=1767)

<sup>348</sup> Serbia by Europe-Cities, “Healthcare in Serbia,” 2011, <http://www.europe-cities.com/en/633/serbia/health/>

<sup>349</sup> Boris Babic, “Serbia’s Low-Cost Health-Care System Breeds Corruption,” 10 February 2011, [http://www.monstersandcritics.com/news/health/features/article\\_1618449.php/Serbia-s-low-cost-health-care-system-breeds-corruption-News-Feature](http://www.monstersandcritics.com/news/health/features/article_1618449.php/Serbia-s-low-cost-health-care-system-breeds-corruption-News-Feature)

rural areas cannot pay for private services or the cost of additional private insurance.<sup>350</sup>  
351

**Exchange 52: My arm is broken, can you help me?**

Soldier:	My arm is broken, can you help me?	slomlyena mee ye Rooka, mozhete lee daa mee pomognete?
Local:	Yes, come with me.	daa, podyeete saa mnoom

In addition, instances of mental illness have increased in the last 20 years.<sup>352, 353</sup> Treatment for mental illness is covered under the HIF system, but it is difficult for people living in rural areas to access any kind of treatment for such problems.

**Rural Education**

Beyond primary school, which starts at age seven and goes through the mid teenage years, students have the choice of completing four years of secondary school, either in general education or a vocational program that can lead to two years of technical college. Students who complete the general education track in secondary school can also attend college, with options for a broad range of study.<sup>354, 355</sup>



© The U.S. Army / flickr.com  
Army personnel at Kosovo school

In rural areas throughout Serbia, children lack access to schools. In addition, rural students seldom benefit from computers or other technology.<sup>356</sup> Today, the Vojvodina

<sup>350</sup> Serbia by Europe-Cities, “Healthcare in Serbia,” 2011, <http://www.europe-cities.com/en/633/serbia/health/>

<sup>351</sup> Travel.State.Gov, U.S. Department of State, “Serbia: Medical Facilities and Health Information,” 25 April 2011, [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1014.html#traffic\\_safety](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1014.html#traffic_safety)

<sup>352</sup> Dusica Lecic Tosevski, Milica Pejovic Milovancevic, and Smiljka Popovic Deusic, “Reform of Mental Health Care in Serbia: Ten Steps Plus One,” *World Psychiatry* 6, no. 2 (June 2007), <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2219903/>

<sup>353</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica Online, “Serbia: Government and Society: Health and Welfare,” 2010, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-42945>

<sup>354</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Serbia: Government and Society: Education,” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/654691/Serbia>

<sup>355</sup> Consulate General of the Republic of Serbia—New York, “Educational System in Serbia,” 2008, <http://www.serbiaconsulatenyc.com/en/obrazovanje.html>

<sup>356</sup> Dejan Drobnjak, “Germany & World Vision Partner to Help Serbia’s Children with Disabilities,” *World Vision*, 17 February 2009, [http://meero.worldvision.org/news\\_article.php?newsID=1767](http://meero.worldvision.org/news_article.php?newsID=1767)

province in the north has the highest literacy rate in Serbia.<sup>357</sup> An even more intractable problem than regional inequality, however, is the high dropout rate and low enrollment rate among Roma children in Serbia.<sup>358</sup>

Half of the Roma living in Serbia are found in rural areas. They face many barriers to education, including joblessness, discrimination, lack of teachers trained in multicultural education, and lack of institutional support. The result of this inequity is a disproportionately high poverty rate for Roma of all ages and education levels.<sup>359, 360</sup> Additionally, Roma children are overrepresented in special needs schools.<sup>361</sup> In some special needs schools, Roma children constitute 50–80% of the student population.<sup>362</sup>

### Daily Life in the Countryside

Life on small farms has kept people in Serbian villages closely associated with the land, organizing their work around the cycles of nature. Farmers and farm employees most often make do without modern farm equipment and supplies, and still employ methods from the past to care for land and livestock. Often, the vegetables and grains they cultivate are organic, grown without chemicals. Many rural Serbs follow customs they learned from their ancestors, passing on stories and folklore and preserving traditional ways of making crafts. Rural life in Serbia is also marked by a number of social events, including fairs, competitions, and exhibitions of folk art or cultural displays.<sup>363</sup> Much of the rural population is aging. Young people are leaving the farms and the old way of life to move to cities where they can find work and educational opportunities.<sup>364</sup>



© Jonathan Davis  
Older men talking

Differences in rural lifestyle and the physical layout of villages vary according to region. Around Šumadija, an upland region in central Serbia that was once forested, villages are mostly small. They are situated along roads that trace high ridges surrounded by mountains. The houses are built closely together, made of rough planks of wood or even

<sup>357</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Serbia: Government and Society—Education,” 2011,

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/654691/Serbia>

<sup>358</sup> UNICEF, “Country Profile: Education in Serbia,” 2008, <http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/Serbia.pdf>

<sup>359</sup> Roma Education Fund, “Advancing Education of Roma in Serbia: Poverty and Inequities,” 2007, 15,

[http://www.romaeducationfund.hu/documents/Serbia\\_report.pdf](http://www.romaeducationfund.hu/documents/Serbia_report.pdf)

<sup>360</sup> Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, “Education for Roma: For a Better Start into a Better Life,” n.d., [http://www.sdc.admin.ch/en/Home/Projects/Education\\_for\\_ethnic\\_minorities\\_in\\_Serbia](http://www.sdc.admin.ch/en/Home/Projects/Education_for_ethnic_minorities_in_Serbia)

<sup>361</sup> UNICEF, “Country Profile: Education in Serbia,” 2008, <http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/Serbia.pdf>

<sup>362</sup> Refworld, “Report on Serbia, Adopted on 14 December 2007,” 29 April 2008, 24,

[http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-](http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/refworld/rwmain?page=search&docid=481712060&skip=0&query=Serbia)

[bin/texis/vtx/refworld/rwmain?page=search&docid=481712060&skip=0&query=Serbia](http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/refworld/rwmain?page=search&docid=481712060&skip=0&query=Serbia)

<sup>363</sup> Serbian Government, “Agriculture,” 2004, <http://www.srbija.gov.rs/pages/article.php?id=93>

<sup>364</sup> Marijana Pantić and Jelena Živanović, “Regional Differences Between Rural Areas of Serbia in Population Aging and Agricultural Activities: Case Studies of the Indija and Knjaževac Municipalities,” *Spatium International Review*, no. 22 (July 2010): 29–37, <http://www.doiserbia.nb.rs/img/doi/1450-569X/2010/1450-569X1022029P.pdf>

logs that are often plastered on the outside. The roofs are shingled. In the northern plains of the Vojvodina province, the construction is quite different. Here, a greater distance separates villages, which tend to be much larger, compared to those in central Serbia. Villages in the Vojvodina were built in the 18th and 19th centuries, much more recently than those of the central upland regions. They follow the construction and layout created by military engineers of the Habsburg forces that secured the plains in this northern area. Although these villages are relatively large, they are agricultural. Villagers constructed elongated homes joined by walls or fences intended to withstand raids by Ottomans coming from the south. Later, after the danger from the raids passed, they built smaller villages and small, scattered farmsteads between the large settlements.<sup>365</sup>

### Asking to Speak to a Person in Charge

Within 24 hours of arrival in Serbia, foreign visitors must register with the police department that has jurisdiction over the area where they are staying. Failure to do this can result in expulsion from the country. If visitors stay in a hotel, the hotel staff will automatically register them with the appropriate police department.<sup>366</sup>



© kgbristor1 / flickr.com  
Policemen on guard

### Exchange 53: Can you take me to the police chief?

Soldier:	Can you take me to the police chief?	mozhete lee me odvestee vashem shefoo poleetseeeye?
Local:	Yes.	daa

The police are the principal authorities throughout Serbia. Even in small villages, visitors can ask the police questions or for help. Visitors can also go to a church and call on a priest for assistance. Every town and village in Serbia has a church, and priests are people of authority, granted leadership by virtue of their affiliation with the church. They can help with directions and small matters.

<sup>365</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Rural Settlement,” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/654691/Serbia/228326/Rural-settlement>

<sup>366</sup> Travel.State.Gov, U.S. Department of State, “Serbia: Entry/Exit Requirements—Registration with Local Authorities,” 25 April 2011, [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1014.html#traffic\\_safety](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1014.html#traffic_safety)

**Exchange 54: Sir, we need your help.**

Soldier:	Sir, we need your help / advice / opinion.	gospodeene, tRebaa naam vaashaa pomoty / savet / meeshlyenye
Local:	Sure.	svaakaako

Sometimes it may not be possible to easily find a police officer or a priest. Another way to contact a person in charge is to speak to a mayor.

**Exchange 55: Is your police chief here?**

Soldier:	Is your police chief here?	daa lee vash shef poleetseeeye zheevye ovde?
Local:	Yes.	daa

Mayors serve in districts that encompass more than one town. Because they preside over a broad area, mayors may be more difficult to locate, and their hours are restricted to public working hours.

**Border Crossings and Checkpoints**

Visitors to the country can enter Serbia only through official border crossings staffed by customs and police or military officers. The customs officials will stamp passports. Foreigners who try to leave the country without their passports being properly stamped are in violation of the law and will incur penalties.<sup>367</sup>



© frozy / flickr.com  
Serbia-Hungary border

<sup>367</sup> Travel.State.Gov, U.S. Department of State, “Serbia: Country Specific Information,” 25 April 2011, [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1014.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1014.html)

**Exchange 56: Please get out of the car.**

Soldier:	Please get out of the car.	moleem vas eezadyeete eez kola
Local:	OK.	oo Redoo

It is also illegal for a foreign person to enter Serbia if the original entry point was Kosovo. Serbian authorities also do not recognize entry points from anywhere on Kosovo's borders with Montenegro, Albania, or Macedonia.<sup>368, 369</sup>

**Exchange 57: Show us the car registration.**

Soldier:	Show us the car registration.	pokazheete nam RegeestRatseeeyoo
Local:	OK.	oo Redoo

People entering or traveling through Serbia are not permitted to have weapons, unless they are using them for an officially registered hunting trip.<sup>370</sup>

**Exchange 58: Are you carrying any guns?**

Soldier:	Are you carrying any guns?	daa ee noseete oRoozhye?
Local:	Yes.	daa

If stopped and questioned, hunters carrying weapons must provide documentation that the trip was organized by the Hunters' Association of Serbia—the official hunting organization that the government recognizes.<sup>371</sup>

<sup>368</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs, Serbia, "Serbia: Entry Requirements," 21 December 2009, <http://www.dfa.ie/home/index.aspx?id=25063>

<sup>369</sup> Travel.State.Gov, U.S. Department of State, "Serbia: Country Specific Information," 25 April 2011, [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1014.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1014.html)

<sup>370</sup> Travel Serbia, "Weapons," 2011, <http://www.travelsrbia.info/customs.php>

<sup>371</sup> Travel Serbia, "Weapons," 2011, <http://www.travelsrbia.info/customs.php>

### Exchange 59: Is this all the ID you have?

Soldier:	Is this all the ID you have?	daa lee soo ovo sveen dokooomentee koye eemate?
Local:	Yes.	daa

Checkpoints may be located at random points inside the country. Although the country's security situation has been relatively calm, indiscriminate attacks can occur. Sometimes they take place in areas where there are tourists or foreign visitors. In the cities, demonstrations or incidents involving armed violence sometimes occur. They are seldom political in nature but usually caused by organized crime, thus not directed against foreign travelers.<sup>372</sup>

In 2010, checkpoints were set up in northern Kosovska Mitrovica on the border with Kosovo. NATO-led forces beefed up security checkpoints in response to increased violence in the area.<sup>373</sup>

### Exchange 60: Where is the nearest checkpoint?

Soldier:	Where is the nearest checkpoint?	gde ye naybleezha kontRolna tachka?
Local:	It's two kilometers.	dva keelometRa

### Landmines

In 2007 and 2008 several casualties from landmines occurred in Serbia.<sup>374</sup> In clearance operations, the large majority of mines found (around 70%) were antitank, and the remaining mines were antipersonnel. Several people were killed or injured by them, and it became the responsibility of the army to map the mines and clear them.



© D-minor / flickr.com  
Minefield, Kosovo

<sup>372</sup> Foreign & Commonwealth Office, "Travel and Living Abroad: Europe—Serbia," 11 May 2011, <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/europe/serbia>

<sup>373</sup> B92.net, "Checkpoints set up in northern K. Mitrovica," 6 October 2010, [http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2010&mm=10&dd=06&nav\\_id=70098](http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2010&mm=10&dd=06&nav_id=70098)

<sup>374</sup> Landmine and Cluster Mmunition Monitor, "Serbia," in *Landmine Monitor Report 2009*, 2009, <http://www.the-monitor.org/index.php/publications/display?url=lm/2008/countries/serbia.html#394087906>

Some of the mines still remain, and travelers are asked to use caution when traveling through certain southern districts.<sup>375, 376</sup>

**Exchange 61: Is this area mined?**

Soldier:	Is this area mined?	daa lee ye ova zona meeneeRana?
Local:	Yes.	daa

In particular, the high mountainous area north and east of the Kosovo border is known to be mined, and visitors should exercise extreme caution.<sup>377</sup>

**Exchange 62: Do you know this area very well?**

Soldier:	Do you know this area very well?	daa lee znate dobRo ovo oblast?
Local:	Yes.	daa

A larger problem is cluster munitions. In May 2008, Serbia adopted the Convention on Cluster Munitions that was held in Dublin and suggested that the munitions be cleared within 10 years. The Serbian government did not, however, sign the accords at the Oslo conference on 3 December 2008. Instead, it attended the event as an observer.<sup>378</sup> Serbia previously joined other nations in calling for a ban on cluster munitions in areas where civilians are concentrated. Yet Serbia was the only nation from the former Yugoslavia to refrain from signing the December 2008 ban on cluster bombs, and it did not provide an official reason for its refusal to sign.<sup>379</sup>

Serbia does not produce cluster munitions but has stockpiled them, and they have been used by warring groups in extensive regions of the country. The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, secessionist forces, and various militias used them during the

<sup>375</sup>Refworld, “Serbia: Final Status for Kosovo—Towards Durable Solutions for IDPs or New Displacement Risk?,” UNHCR, 10 December 2007, 110–111, <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/refworld/rwmain?page=search&docid=475e4b0e2&skip=0&query=Serbia>

<sup>376</sup>Department of Foreign Affairs, Serbia, “Serbia: Safety & Security,” 10 March 2011, <http://www.dfa.ie/home/index.aspx?id=25063>

<sup>377</sup>Foreign & Commonwealth Office, “Travel and Living Abroad: Europe—Serbia,” 11 May 2011, <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/europe/serbia>

<sup>378</sup>Land Mines and Cluster Munition Monitor, “Serbia,” in *Landmine Monitor Report 2009*, 2009, <http://www.the-monitor.org/index.php/publications/display?url=lm/2008/countries/serbia.html#954149606>

<sup>379</sup>Cluster Munition Coalition, “Serbia Urged to Sign the Cluster Bomb Ban,” 10 March 2009, <http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/news/?id=1372>

period when Yugoslavia broke into separate states. Yugoslav military forces also launched them into Albanian controlled border areas, and NATO forces dropped them on Serbia and Kosovo during the NATO bombing campaign in 1999.<sup>380</sup>

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<sup>380</sup> Land Mines and Cluster Munition Monitor, “Serbia,” in *Landmine Monitor Report 2009*, 2009, <http://www.the-monitor.org/index.php/publications/display?url=lm/2008/countries/serbia.html#954149606>

## Chapter 5 Assessment

1. Most parcels of land in Serbia were individually owned by small farmers before 2006.

**False**

Prior to the adoption of a new land law in 2006, the state owned most land parcels according to the socialist government policies of Yugoslavia. Individual property owners were mainly farmers who owned small parcels of land.

2. Many of today's rural farmers or agricultural laborers previously worked in urban factories during the conflicts of the 1990s.

**True**

Many of the farmers or agricultural laborers originally lived in the countryside, but fled to the cities during the conflicts of the 1990s to work in factories. They then returned to rural Serbia when the conflicts ended. Thus, many rural workers are aging or lack experience with agrarian production, adding to the difficulty Serbia faces in rebuilding its rural workforce

3. Health services are more widely available in larger cities than in rural areas throughout Serbia.

**True**

Aside from certain regional differences, health services are more widely available in larger cities. Although entitled to receive a range of health services, many people have no access to doctors or healthcare facilities. Often, they live far from the towns where healthcare is available.

4. Students may choose to pursue general or vocational studies in secondary school.

**True**

Vocational programs may lead to technical college. Students who complete the general education track in secondary school can also attend college, with options for a broad range of studies.

5. When foreign visitors travel to Serbia, they must register with the government of the Republic of Serbia.

**False**

When foreign visitors travel to Serbia, they must register within 24 hours of arrival with the police department that has jurisdiction over the area where they are staying. Failure to do this can result in expulsion from the country. If visitors stay in a hotel, the hotel staff will automatically register them with the appropriate police department.

## Chapter 6 Family Life

### Typical Household and Family Structure

Historically, Serbia has been a nation with communal and patriarchal values. In villages, families often lived in collective households known as *zadruga*, in which property was owned by the group, and men in the family were the heads of household.<sup>381</sup> These living arrangements were somewhat romanticized in the media, portraying an ideal, harmonious, unique way of life. In fact, self-sufficient households—charged with producing all their own material needs—involved long work hours, crowded living conditions, and hardship. Not all rural Serbian families took the form of extended families though. A wide variety of lifestyles existed, and many families lived in smaller household units.<sup>382, 383, 384</sup>



© GloomyCorp / flickr.com  
Apartments in Novi Sad

### Exchange 63: How many people live in this house?

Soldier:	How many people live in this house?	koleeko lyoodee zheevvee oo ovoy kootyee?
Local:	Four.	chetvoRo

*Zadrugas* started to break up after the 1880s, but the cultural dynamic they created has remained part of Serbian family life. The *zadruga* model evolved into household units where two generations of families lived together. Later, urban family structure became even smaller. Following the Second World War, more people migrated to the cities and began living in apartments.<sup>385</sup> Government-constructed and utilitarian, the apartments differed markedly from the sprawling family households of the past. Still, married sons often live with their parents, continuing an old tradition. Regardless of societal changes

<sup>381</sup> *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, “Serbia: Cultural Life,” 2011,

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/654691/Serbia/42947/Cultural-life>

<sup>382</sup> Marat Terterov, *Doing Business with Serbia* (London, UK: GMB Publishing Ltd, 2006), 30–31.

<sup>383</sup> Dušan Djordjevich, “Sex and the City—Between the Archives and the Field: A Dialogue on Historical Anthropology of the Balkans,” *Central Europe Review* 2, no. 33 (2 October 2000), [http://www.ce-review.org/00/33/books33\\_djordjevich.html](http://www.ce-review.org/00/33/books33_djordjevich.html)

<sup>384</sup> Judith A. Rasson, Mirjana Stevanović, and Vladimir Ilić, “Chapter 7: Living Spaces in Transition: From Rural to Urban Family Life in Serbia,” in *House Life: Space, Place and Family in Europe*, eds. Donna Birdwell-Pheasant and Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga (New York: Berg Publishers, 1999), 179–180, 185–187, <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=102290279>

<sup>385</sup> Marija Maksin-Mičić, “Problems and Possibilities for Steering Urban Sprawl in Serbia,” 44<sup>th</sup> ISOCARP Congress, 2008, [http://www.isocarp.net/Data/case\\_studies/1156.pdf](http://www.isocarp.net/Data/case_studies/1156.pdf)

and shifting family size, the Serbian family has retained its patriarchal and communal organization through the years.<sup>386, 387, 388</sup>

**Exchange 64: Does your family live here?**

Soldier:	Does your family live here?	daa lee vasha poRodeetsa zheevvee ovde?
Local:	Yes.	daa

**Family Roles for Men and Women**

In the communal *zadruga* households, the agricultural labor was divided by age and gender. Women did some of the field work, although not as much as men. According to tradition, women were responsible for the domestic work, cooking and cleaning, and caring for children. They managed gardens, practiced beekeeping, and raised and cared for animals such as chickens and sheep. They also produced clothing for their families by spinning and weaving from raw material and then sewing garments from the fabric they produced. Men tended to larger livestock and worked intensively in the fields and orchards.<sup>389</sup>



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Shopping at the market

Many of these rural household patterns and divisions of labor endure today in rural Serbia and have been adapted in the lives of urban Serbs. It is common in Serbia for women to be responsible for domestic work while men tend primarily to agricultural labor or wage-paying jobs. At the same time, many women also hold wage-paying jobs besides being responsible for rearing children and household work.<sup>390, 391</sup>

<sup>386</sup> Marat Terterov, *Doing Business with Serbia*, (London, UK: GMB Publishing Ltd., 2006), 30–31.

<sup>387</sup> Dušan Djordjevich, “Sex and the City—Between the Archives and the Field: A Dialogue on Historical Anthropology of the Balkans,” *Central Europe Review* 2, no. 33 (2 October 2000), [http://www.ce-review.org/00/33/books33\\_djordjevich.html](http://www.ce-review.org/00/33/books33_djordjevich.html)

<sup>388</sup> Judith A. Rasson, Mirjana Stevanović, and Vladimir Ilić, “Chapter 7: Living Spaces in Transition: From Rural to Urban Family Life in Serbia,” in *House Life: Space, Place and Family in Europe*, eds. Donna Birdwell-Pheasant and Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga (New York: Berg Publishers, 1999), 179–180, 182, 185–187, <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=102290279>

<sup>389</sup> Judith A. Rasson, Mirjana Stevanović, and Vladimir Ilić, “Chapter 7: Living Spaces in Transition: From Rural to Urban Family Life in Serbia,” in *House Life: Space, Place and Family in Europe*, eds. Donna Birdwell-Pheasant and Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga, (New York: Berg Publishers, 1999), 182, <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=102290279>

<sup>390</sup> Tatjana Djuric Kuzmanovic, “Gender Effects of Globalisation on the Serbian Economy: The Case of the Clothing Industry ‘Novitet’,” *Journal for Political Theory and Research on Globalisation, Development and Gender Issues*, 2006, [http://www.globalizacija.com/doc\\_en/e0047lit.htm](http://www.globalizacija.com/doc_en/e0047lit.htm)

**Exchange 65: Are these your children?**

Soldier:	Are these your children?	daa lee soo ovo vasha detsa?
Local:	Yes.	daa

Today, rural and urban Serbian women often head the household because the men in the family have been killed or injured in one of the wars or civil conflicts of the 1990s. Women’s ability to function in a traditional role has been seriously disrupted by the absence of male family members. Women may have also suffered trauma from violence directed against them or their families during wartime. Lack of access to medical, material, or financial assistance can also negatively affect Serbian households.

**Exchange 66: Are you the only person who has a job?**

Soldier:	Are you the only person in your family who has a job?	daa lee ste vee yedeena osoba oo vashoy poRodeetsee koya eema posao?
Local:	No, my husband works too.	ne, moyaa moozh Raadee taakodye

**Status of Women, Children, and Elders**

*Women*

Women first received legal equality with men in 1943 as the country was becoming a socialist state. Three years later, their legal equality was constitutionally guaranteed under the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia.<sup>392, 393</sup> After independence, the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia (2006) established equal rights for women. Article 21 establishes “equal legal protection”



© Nenad Stevanovic  
Serbian woman

<sup>391</sup> Niels-Hugo Blunch and Victor Sulla, “The Financial Crisis, Labor Market Transitions and Earnings: A Gendered Panel Data Analysis for Serbia,” 25 December 2010, [http://www.iza.org/conference\\_files/worldb2011/blunch\\_n3372.pdf](http://www.iza.org/conference_files/worldb2011/blunch_n3372.pdf)

<sup>392</sup> Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Republic of Serbia, “Fighting for Women’s Rights Centennial,” 8 March 2009, 15, [http://www.canada-serbia-jrp.org/fileadmin/pdf\\_serbia/March\\_8\\_Brochure\\_ENG\\_images.pdf](http://www.canada-serbia-jrp.org/fileadmin/pdf_serbia/March_8_Brochure_ENG_images.pdf)

<sup>393</sup> Brunner Borgner and David Johnson, “Timeline: The Former Yugoslavia,” Fact Monster, Pearson Education, 2009, <http://www.factmonster.com/spot/yugotimeline1.html>

and prohibits discrimination on grounds of “race, gender, nationality, social background, birth, faith” and other criteria.<sup>394</sup> Women also have equal access to education and healthcare. They are entitled to receive a family pension if widowed and sometimes when divorced. Women also have inheritance rights equal to those of men although in some parts of Serbia custom dictates they register property in either their husband’s or another male relative’s name.<sup>395, 396 397</sup>

**Exchange 67: Did you grow up here?**

Soldier:	Did you grow up here?	daa lee ste odRaslee ovde?
Local:	Yes.	daa

Many institutions in Serbia are designed to promote and protect women’s rights. Even so, longstanding tradition prevails in many arenas, and women lack functional equality in both status and position.<sup>398</sup> Women have legal protections against violence, yet domestic violence remains a problem, and it is seen as a “fact of life.” In addition, women who report abuse often meet with reprisal.<sup>399</sup> Crimes such as rape can go unreported or only lightly punished.<sup>400</sup> In addition, certain groups of women in Serbia experience more discrimination and social marginalization than others. This imbalance can be seen when comparing the average rate of unemployment for women in Serbia: displaced women experience a 32% higher unemployment rate, refugee women have 15% higher unemployment numbers, and Roma women experience the highest rate of unemployment at 39%.<sup>401</sup>

In Serbia today, women working in business may hold high positions within a company.<sup>402</sup> In fact, a woman may be the company’s highest and most authoritative

<sup>394</sup> Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Republic of Serbia, “Fighting for Women’s Rights Centennial,” 8 March 2009, [http://www.canada-serbia-jrp.org/fileadmin/pdf\\_serbia/March\\_8\\_Brochure\\_ENG\\_images.pdf](http://www.canada-serbia-jrp.org/fileadmin/pdf_serbia/March_8_Brochure_ENG_images.pdf)

<sup>395</sup> Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Republic of Serbia, “Fighting for Women’s Rights Centennial,” 8 March 2009, [http://www.canada-serbia-jrp.org/fileadmin/pdf\\_serbia/March\\_8\\_Brochure\\_ENG\\_images.pdf](http://www.canada-serbia-jrp.org/fileadmin/pdf_serbia/March_8_Brochure_ENG_images.pdf)

<sup>396</sup> Social Institutions & Gender Index, “Gender Equality and Social Institutions in Serbia and Montenegro,” 2005, <http://genderindex.org/country/serbia-and-montenegro>

<sup>397</sup> Marija Koliln, “Gender Inequalities and the Status of Women in the Labor Market in Transitional Serbia,” *Anthropology of East Europe Review* 28, no. 1 (Spring 2010):119–137, <http://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/aer/article/viewFile/657/750>

<sup>398</sup> Canadian International Development Agency, “Strategy to Integrate Gender Equality in the Balkans Program,” n.d, [http://www.e-jednakost.org.rs/kurs/kurs/download/cida\\_balkan.pdf](http://www.e-jednakost.org.rs/kurs/kurs/download/cida_balkan.pdf)

<sup>399</sup> Social Institutions & Gender Index, “Gender Equality and Social Institutions in Serbia and Montenegro,” 2005, <http://genderindex.org/country/serbia-and-montenegro>

<sup>400</sup> Canadian International Development Agency, “Strategy to Integrate Gender Equality in the Balkans Program,” n.d, [http://www.e-jednakost.org.rs/kurs/kurs/download/cida\\_balkan.pdf](http://www.e-jednakost.org.rs/kurs/kurs/download/cida_balkan.pdf)

<sup>401</sup> Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Republic of Serbia, “Fighting for Women’s Rights Centennial,” 8 March 2009, [http://www.canada-serbia-jrp.org/fileadmin/pdf\\_serbia/March\\_8\\_Brochure\\_ENG\\_images.pdf](http://www.canada-serbia-jrp.org/fileadmin/pdf_serbia/March_8_Brochure_ENG_images.pdf)

<sup>402</sup> Stantonchase.com, “Women in Management, Challenges to a Successful Career 2009,” 2009, [http://www.stantonchase.com/best\\_practices/Women\\_in\\_Management\\_challenges\\_in\\_successful\\_career.pdf](http://www.stantonchase.com/best_practices/Women_in_Management_challenges_in_successful_career.pdf)

executive, although it is usually men who exercise this level of power.<sup>403</sup> At most levels, women routinely participate in business meetings and decision making as equals with men.<sup>404</sup>

### Children

Children at an early age are taught to help with house work. Daughters are taught to sew, cook, clean, and help care for babies and household animals. Sons in rural areas learn to work in the fields, care for farm animals, and do mechanical work. Children also learn collective, group values under the care of extended family members. If a parent is absent, the child may live in the home of an uncle or other relative.<sup>405</sup>



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Children picking through trash

Children have certain protections under the law. Legally, a child over the age of 10 has the right to express a direct opinion. In addition, at age 15, a child in Serbia can change his or her name, decide which school to attend, and maintain personal contact with an absent parent.<sup>406</sup>

### Exchange 68: Do your children go to school?

Soldier:	Do your children go to school?	daa lee vasha detsa eedoo oo shkooloo?
Local:	Yes.	daa

Children in Serbian families are not encouraged to leave home as they grow into young adulthood. Frequently, they stay in the family home until they marry.<sup>407</sup> A son who marries may bring his wife to live in his family’s home.

<sup>403</sup> Marija Koliln, “Gender Inequalities and the Status of Women in the Labor Market in Transitional Serbia,” *Anthropology of East Europe Review* 28, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 119–137, <http://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/aeer/article/viewFile/657/750>

<sup>404</sup> Marat Terterov, *Doing Business with Serbia* (London, UK: GMB Publishing Ltd., 2006): 36.

<sup>405</sup> Stema Guide, “About Serbia—Way of Life: The Society and the Family, Between Tradition and Modernity,” 2006–2009, <http://www.serbia-visit.com/Way-of-life.33.0.html>

<sup>406</sup> Gordana Kovaček Stanić, “Serbian Family Law: Rights of the Child,” *The International Journal of Children’s Rights* 17, no 4 (2009), <http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/mnp/chil/2009/00000017/00000004/art00005>

<sup>407</sup> Stema Guide, “About Serbia—Way of Life: The Society and the Family, Between Tradition and Modernity,” 2009, <http://www.serbia-visit.com/Way-of-life.33.0.html>

## Exchange 69: Is this your entire family?

Soldier:	Is this your entire family?	daa lee ye ovo vasha tsela poRodeetsa?
Local:	Yes.	daa

Many children in Serbia are affected by poverty, homelessness, and discrimination. A large number of children live in refugee camps.<sup>408</sup> Often born in these camps, they have grown up in an environment characterized by social instability, lack of healthcare, and abuse of drugs and alcohol. They may have witnessed or experienced violence directed against themselves or family members. Crowded government housing or makeshift tents provide homes for refugees. Such children do not usually have access to psychological counseling, mentoring, or schooling.<sup>409, 410, 411</sup>

Children with disabilities suffer an added burden. They are excluded from healthcare services and are socially isolated.<sup>412</sup> A survey of the general population recently has shown a more accepting attitude toward disabilities. The availability of state support and services is crucial to helping families care for disabled children.<sup>413</sup>

### Elders

Serbia ranks fourth in the world based on people over the age of 65.<sup>414</sup> Traditionally, the elderly in Serbia have occupied an important position within the household. Children and grandchildren have benefitted from close social interactions since their elders act as caregivers for young children in the family. By being closely connected with children, telling them stories about Serbian life, and sharing folk tales and histories, older family members pass on the



© photos.de.tibo / flickr.com  
Elder couple

<sup>408</sup> Idriz Seferi, “Serbia-Kosovo: Refugees—From Fire to Frying Pan,” *Transitions Online, Relief Web*, 19 February 2008, <http://reliefweb.int/node/257784>

<sup>409</sup> UNICEF, “Launch of the State of Children in Serbia Report 2006,” 8 February 2007, [http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/media\\_38258.html](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/media_38258.html)

<sup>410</sup> Global Balkans Network, “Internally Displaced People in Serbia: People and Families That Don’t Exist,” September 2007, <http://www.globalbalkans.org/node/18>

<sup>411</sup> International Student Movement of IPPNW, “Refugee Children in Collective Settlement Cortanovci,” 2002, <http://www.ippnw-students.org/Chapters/SerbiaMontenegro/refugees.html>

<sup>412</sup> UNICEF, “Launch of the State of Children in Serbia Report 2006,” 8 February 2007, [http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/media\\_38258.html](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/media_38258.html)

<sup>413</sup> UNICEF, “Public Opinion in Serbia on Social Inclusion of Children with Disability,” 3 December 2009, [http://www.unicef.org/serbia/media\\_13496.html](http://www.unicef.org/serbia/media_13496.html)

<sup>414</sup> Biljana Pekusic, “Serbia’s Demographic Dilemma,” *SETimes.com*, 14 February 2011, [http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en\\_GB/features/setimes/articles/2011/02/14/reportage-01](http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/articles/2011/02/14/reportage-01)

traditions of Serbian culture. Grandparents also help educate them about the family roles and responsibilities that children are expected to fulfill.

The years of conflict and war in Serbia changed the family structure and the role of the elderly. As many young people migrated to the cities in search of jobs and opportunities, the elderly have often remained in the countryside looking after small farms or a plot of land. Consequently, many older people live alone without access to transportation or healthcare. They may have to walk long distances to obtain their supplies or medicine from the nearest town. Some may have a small pension, and they supplement their diet with food they grow in their own gardens.<sup>415, 416</sup>

**Exchange 70: Where do you work, sir?**

Soldier:	Where do you work, sir?	gde Radeete, gospodeene?
Local:	I am not employed, I am a farmer.	nee raadeem neegde, ya sam zemlyoraadneek

If younger family members are present and their finances and lifestyle allow, they often continue to follow the custom of caring for elderly relatives. In years past, many elderly people and their children and grandchildren would typically all live under the same roof. The Western practice of removing elders from the family and placing them in facilities for the aged is uncommon in Serbia.<sup>417</sup>

**Marriage, Divorce, and Birth**

*Marriage*

Men and women cannot legally marry until age 18, according to Serbia’s family code. In addition, marriage should be entered into freely by both parties, without coercion.<sup>418</sup> Among some groups, including the Roma, rules are likely to be overlooked, and marriage often takes place at much younger ages. The Roma and other ethnic minorities in Serbia may follow a practice in which marriage is transacted through money or



© whl.travel / flickr.com  
Wedding procession

<sup>415</sup> Biljana Pekusic, Serbia’s Demographic Dilemma,” SETimes.com, 14 February 2011, [http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en\\_GB/features/setimes/articles/2011/02/14/reportage-01](http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/articles/2011/02/14/reportage-01)  
<sup>416</sup> Bojana Matejic and Vesna Bjegovic, “Needs Assessment Among Elderly Population in Serbia,” n.d., <http://www.integratedcarenetwork.org/publish/articles/000035/article.htm>  
<sup>417</sup> Stema Guide, “About Serbia—Way of Life: The Society and the Family, Between Tradition and Modernity,” 2006–2009, <http://www.serbia-visit.com/Way-of-life.33.0.html>  
<sup>418</sup> OECD, “Gender Equality and Social Institutions in Serbia and Montenegro,” Social Institutions & Gender Index, 2011, <http://genderindex.org/country/serbia-and-montenegro>



older has the right to decide which parent to live with.<sup>423, 424</sup>

Divorce rates in Serbia have fluctuated over the years. Between 1900 and 1950, divorce was relatively rare in Serbia because marriage was stabilized by family connections and the strong patriarchal structure. During the years of the socialist state, divorce laws liberalized, women gained more freedom, and divorce became more common. The rate of divorce fell during the 1990s, the decade of war and instability, when families were forced to rely more on each other for survival. In recent years, divorce has been increasing again. Statistically, one out of every five marriages ends in divorce, and the majority of divorces happen during the first three years of marriage. In Belgrade, the rate is higher, with one out of every four marriages ending in divorce, and in some areas of the country, the divorce rate is over 50%.<sup>425, 426</sup> According to studies, marrying under the pressure of an unplanned pregnancy is a major issue that can adversely affect a marriage. Other causal factors for divorce in Serbia include lack of communication between men and women, disputes with in-laws, infidelity, alcoholism, and family violence.<sup>427, 428</sup>

### *Maternity and Childbirth*

It is customary for newlyweds in Serbia to look forward to the birth of a child, since life in rural areas remains family-centered. In poor villages and households, children may represent a source of labor. They can help the family with farm work, housework, and caring for younger brothers and sisters. Children (especially sons) are also seen as part of a social security network that enables parents to be cared for and supported in their old age. Thus, married couples almost always plan for the inclusion of children in their families.



© ekollin22 / flickr.com  
Proud parents and baby

<sup>423</sup> Gordana Kovaček Stanić, “Serbian Family Law: Rights of the Child,” *The International Journal of Children’s Rights* 17, no 4 (2009): 585–609,

<http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/mnp/chil/2009/00000017/00000004/art00005>

<sup>424</sup> OECD, “Gender Equality and Social Institutions in Serbia and Montenegro,” Social Institutions & Gender Index, 2011, <http://genderindex.org/country/serbia-and-montenegro>

<sup>425</sup> BalkanInsight.com, “Serbia Divorces Up, Shotgun Weddings Doomed,” 9 February 2009,

<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/serbia-divorces-up-shotgun-weddings-doomed>

<sup>426</sup> Vera Gudac-Dodić, “Divorce in Serbia,” Central and Eastern European Online Library, 2008, 137–147,

<http://www.ceeol.com/aspx/getdocument.aspx?logid=5&id=bb17446e44b746aeaf92e2ecae7ea6af>

<sup>427</sup> BalkanInsight.com, “Serbia Divorces Up, Shotgun Weddings Doomed,” 9 February 2009,

<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/serbia-divorces-up-shotgun-weddings-doomed>

<sup>428</sup> Vera Gudac-Dodić, “Divorce in Serbia,” Central and Eastern European Online Library, 2008, 137–147,

<http://www.ceeol.com/aspx/getdocument.aspx?logid=5&id=bb17446e44b746aeaf92e2ecae7ea6af>

**Exchange 73: Do you have any brothers?**

Soldier:	Do you have any brothers?	daa lee eemate bRatye?
Local:	Yes.	daa

Practices affecting childbearing and maternity in Serbia today have improved over the last two decades. Although the nation’s healthcare system is inadequate in many parts of the country, Serbian women have some level of legal protections during pregnancy and childbirth. According to the nation’s Labor Law of 2006, women in their final 8 weeks of pregnancy cannot work overtime, and during their entire pregnancy they cannot do work that would endanger the child. The law also stipulates that after the child is born, working women are entitled to take maternity leave and a 2-year leave of absence to care for the child.<sup>429</sup>

**Family Events and Rites of Passage**

Families gather to celebrate birthdays, marriages, and other special events. For Orthodox families in Serbia, church activities are often a significant part of the event, adding a layer of ritual. Family gatherings in general involve sharing of specially prepared foods. Usually, extended family members and friends are invited to attend the celebration.



© ian\_peric / flickr.com  
Family gathering

**Exchange 74: Are these people part of your family?**

Soldier:	Are these people part of your family?	daa lee soo ovey lyoodee deo vashe poRodeetse?
Local:	No.	ne

A baby’s christening, a traditional ceremony for Orthodox families, is presided over by a priest. The ceremony may be held in a church or at home. The godparent is present and from that time forward assumes a lifelong role as mentor, encouraging the child’s

<sup>429</sup> Marija Lukic, “On the Road to the EU: Monitoring Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in Serbia,” OSI Network Women’s Program, 2006, <http://www.ignp.net/download/EOWM-Report-Serbia.pdf>

adherence to religious faith. The godparent also provides clothing and a candle for the ceremony and a gift for the baby, sometimes a symbolic gold or silver coin.<sup>430, 431</sup>

On Patron Saint's Day (*Krsna Slava*), many Serbs—especially in rural areas—still follow or are now renewing the tradition of honoring the family's saint. It is a very old custom dating back to pre-Christian times but adapted into Christian practice. It remains a religious ceremony, practiced according to region and individual. It often involves sharing a ritual meal and a special cake or kind of sweet bread that symbolizes one's patron saint.<sup>432, 433</sup>

## Naming Conventions

The naming of a child in Serbia is similar to the practice in Western culture. The parents choose a first (given) name, and the child's surname (last name) is that of the family, usually from the paternal side.<sup>434</sup> Parents may ask the child's godparents to approve the given name, depending on the level of religious formality and whether godparents are involved.<sup>435</sup> Generally, however, the name is the parents' choice.



© ekollin22 / flickr.com  
Happy new baby

For formal purposes, or in a list, the family name may be written preceding the given name. Informally, however, and in modern usage, the word order follows the Western naming system.<sup>436</sup> It should be noted that the northern Serbian province of Vojvodina was heavily influenced by Hungary and here names may follow the Hungarian Eastern order, with family name first, followed by the given (or first) name.<sup>437, 438</sup>

<sup>430</sup> Umiacs.umd, "Religious and Holyday Foods: Christening," n.d.,

[http://www.umiacs.umd.edu/users/lpv/YU/HTML/food\\_religious.html](http://www.umiacs.umd.edu/users/lpv/YU/HTML/food_religious.html)

<sup>431</sup> YASOU, "The Orthodox Baptism Ceremony," 2005, <http://www.yasou.org/church/baptism.htm>

<sup>432</sup> Umiacs.umd, "Religious and Holyday Foods: Saints Blessing." n.d.,

[http://www.umiacs.umd.edu/users/lpv/YU/HTML/food\\_religious.html](http://www.umiacs.umd.edu/users/lpv/YU/HTML/food_religious.html)

<sup>433</sup> Lev Puhalo, "The Serbian Slava," n.d., [http://www.holycross-](http://www.holycross-hermitage.com/pages/Orthodox_Life/serb_slava.htm)

[hermitage.com/pages/Orthodox\\_Life/serb\\_slava.htm](http://www.holycross-hermitage.com/pages/Orthodox_Life/serb_slava.htm)

<sup>434</sup> Serbian-name.co.tv, "Serbian Name," n.d., <http://serbian-name.co.tv/>

<sup>435</sup> Everyculture.com, "Serbia and Montenegro: Socialization," 2011, [http://www.everyculture.com/Sa-](http://www.everyculture.com/Sa-Th/Serbia-and-Montenegro.html)

[Th/Serbia-and-Montenegro.html](http://www.everyculture.com/Sa-Th/Serbia-and-Montenegro.html)

<sup>436</sup> Behind the Name, the Etymology and History of Surnames, "Serbian and Croatian Names," 2002–2007,

<http://surnames.behindthename.com/nmc/ser.php>

<sup>437</sup> Fbiic.gov, "A Guide to Names and Naming Practices: Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian," March 2006, 30-

31, [http://www.fbiic.gov/public/2008/nov/Naming\\_practice\\_guide\\_UK\\_2006.pdf](http://www.fbiic.gov/public/2008/nov/Naming_practice_guide_UK_2006.pdf)

<sup>438</sup> Fbiic.gov, "A Guide to Names and Naming Practices: Hungarian," March 2006, 15,

[http://www.fbiic.gov/public/2008/nov/Naming\\_practice\\_guide\\_UK\\_2006.pdf](http://www.fbiic.gov/public/2008/nov/Naming_practice_guide_UK_2006.pdf)

First names in Serbia are used by family members and close friends. In more distant or formal situations, acquaintances or business associates should address Serbs by using the last name with a title.<sup>439</sup>

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<sup>439</sup> South Eastern Region Migrant Resource Centre, “Serbian Culture Profile: Naming Conventions,” June 2008, [http://www.sermrc.org.au/uploads/mrc\\_resources/Serbian%20Cultural%20Profile%20\\_2\\_.pdf](http://www.sermrc.org.au/uploads/mrc_resources/Serbian%20Cultural%20Profile%20_2_.pdf)

## Chapter 6 Assessment

1. Serbia has only recently become a nation with communal and patriarchal values.  
**False**  
Historically, Serbia has been communal and patriarchal. In villages, families often lived in collective households known as *zadruga*, in which property was owned by the group and men in the family were the heads of household.
2. Serbian women have inheritance rights equal to those of men.  
**True**  
Women were granted equal inheritance rights in 1946, although in some parts of Serbia custom dictates they register property in either their husband or another male relative's name.
3. Children in Serbia have no legal rights.  
**False**  
Children have certain protections under the law. Legally, a child over the age of 10 has the right to express a direct opinion. In addition, at age 15, a child in Serbia can change his or her name, decide which school to attend, and maintain personal contact with an absent parent.
4. The elderly in Serbia have been marginalized and neglected.  
**False**  
Traditionally, the elderly in Serbia have occupied an important position within the intergenerational rural and later urban households. By being closely connected with children, telling them stories about Serbian life, and sharing folk tales and histories, older family members pass on the traditions of Serbian culture. Grandparents also help to educate children about family roles and responsibilities they are expected to fulfill.
5. Women are entitled to receive family pension if widowed and sometimes when divorced.  
**True**  
If a woman is granted financial support as a result of divorcing her spouse, she may be able to receive a family pension after age 50

## Final Assessment

1. The topography of the Dinaric Alps fostered a large, unified population.  
**True / False**
2. The Morava River flows through central Serbia's least populated region.  
**True / False**
3. It was in Kragujevac that the Serbs first revolted against Turkish rule in the early 19th century.  
**True / False**
4. It was not until after the Crimean War that Serbia gained its formal independence.  
**True / False**
5. After Tito died, the republics of Yugoslavia became more closely unified.  
**True / False**
6. Stefan II became the Serbian Orthodox Church's first archbishop.  
**True / False**
7. Religious law in Serbia recognizes only one "traditional" religion.  
**True / False**
8. Historically, religious identification and nationalism have been closely intertwined in Serbian history.  
**True / False**
9. Patron Saint Day (Krsna Slava), marks the date on which family members received baptism centuries ago.  
**True / False**
10. One of the Christian monasteries in Serbia is also a UNESCO World Heritage site.  
**True / False**
11. The Serbian Orthodox Church is an important part of Serbia's national identity.  
**True / False**
12. Direct eye contact communicates respect and a straightforward attitude to Serbs.  
**True / False**
13. Visitors to Serbia are welcome to discuss controversial topics.  
**True / False**
14. Serbs are not likely to feel slighted at the refusal of an invitation.  
**True / False**

15. St. Vitus Day (*Vidovdan*) appeals to the Serbian people's sense of nationalism.  
**True / False**
16. A housing shortage developed in Serbian cities in the decades following World War II.  
**True / False**
17. Insufficient sanitation remains a problem in Serbian cities.  
**True / False**
18. The Ministry of Education in Serbia has been working to teach democratic principles.  
**True / False**
19. MasterCard and Visa are commonly accepted.  
**True / False**
20. It is common for guests to pool finances to help the host pay for a restaurant meal.  
**True / False**
21. In the former Yugoslavia and in present-day Serbia, rural land transactions have been legally registered.  
**True / False**
22. In eastern rural Serbia, migration and a low birthrate have resulted in depopulation.  
**True / False**
23. Serbia's healthcare system includes treatment for mental illness.  
**True / False**
24. Discrimination is not one of the many barriers to education Roma children face.  
**True / False**
25. Foreigners may legally enter Serbia from any border location.  
**True / False**
26. The *zadrugas* of the past still influence the collective family living style in Serbia today Serbian family life.  
**True / False**
27. Women do not hold high positions in Serbian businesses.  
**True / False**

28. Many children in Serbia are affected by poverty, homelessness, and discrimination.

**True / False**

29. Many older people live alone without access to transportation or healthcare.

**True / False**

30. When the socialist state liberalized divorce laws, women gained more freedom, and divorce became more common.

**True / False**