



Montenegro

A small country of steep mountains and a short, dramatic Adriatic coast, where walled Venetian towns sit below peaks that plunge straight into the sea.

AT A GLANCE

Facts to know

CAPITAL

Podgorica

OLD ROYAL CAPITAL

Cetinje, home of the president's official residence and the National Museum

POPULATION

About 620,000 (2023 census)

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

Montenegrin. Serbian, Bosnian, Albanian and Croatian are also in official use

CURRENCY

Euro, used since 2002 although Montenegro is not in the eurozone

AREA

About 13,900 km²

GOVERNMENT

Parliamentary republic

HIGHEST MOUNTAIN

Zla Kolata, 2,534 m, on the border with Albania. Bobotov Kuk in Durmitor, 2,523 m, was long thought to be the highest

MAIN RIVERS

The Tara, which carves the Tara River Canyon, the Lim, and the Moraa, which flows through Podgorica into Lake Skadar

NEIGHBOURS

Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo and Albania by land. Across the Adriatic, ferries link Bar with Bari in Italy

DRIVES ON THE

Right

CALLING CODE

+382

A 45-minute trip to Montenegro

Everything you need is in this pack. No preparation beyond printing. Adapt the timing to your group.

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| 0 to 5 min | Welcome. Show the map page and find Montenegro together. Ask: who has been there, or knows someone from there? |
| 5 to 15 min | Read the facts at a glance, then three moments from the story: 1042: Duklja breaks free; 1858: Victory at Grahovac; 2017: Montenegro joins NATO. |
| 15 to 25 min | At the table: talk about Njeguši ham and Pljevlja cheese. Idea: bring a small taste (bread, cheese, fruit, tea) if your kitchen can help. |
| 25 to 30 min | Say it like a local: practise "Dobro jutro" (Good morning), "Dobar dan" (Good day, hello), "Dobro vee" (Good evening). Everyone says them together. |
| 30 to 40 min | Quiz: read the questions aloud, or play the big-screen version at https://worldstroll.com/countries/montenegro/group . No scores needed. |
| 40 to 45 min | Talk about it (questions page), then stamp or sign everyone's passport page. |

You will need

- This printed pack (one per table, or one each)
- Pens for the quiz
- Optional: a world map or globe, a small tasting, music from the country

Montenegro and its cities



- Podgorica (Central Montenegro): The Millennium Bridge over the Moraa, The old city Clock Tower, The Roman ruins of Doclea nearby
- Nikši (Western Montenegro): Nikši beer from the Trebjesa brewery, The wide Nikši field, The railway to Podgorica
- Cetinje (Old Royal Capital Cetinje): The National Museum of Montenegro, Biljarda, the residence Njegoš built in 1838, Old foreign embassies from royal times
- Kotor (Bay of Kotor, coastal region): The Cathedral of Saint Tryphon, City walls climbing the mountain, Its many cats
- Budva (Budva Riviera, coastal region): The walled Old Town, Sandy beaches of the Budva Riviera, Sveti Stefan nearby
- Bar (Coastal region): The port and the ferry to Bari, Stari Bar, the old town, The end of the

Belgrade to Bar railway

- Herceg Novi (Bay of Kotor, coastal region): The Forte Mare fortress, The Kanli Kula fortress and its open-air stage, Its place at the entrance to the Bay of Kotor
- Ulcinj (Coastal region, far south): Velika Plaža, the Long Beach, Ada Bojana river island, Ulcinj Castle
- Žabljak (Northern region): Durmitor National Park, The Black Lake, Hiking to Bobotov Kuk
- Pljevlja (Northern region): Pljevlja cheese, The ehotina river, The road to the Tara Bridge

A short history of Montenegro

Montenegro's story is one of a small mountain people holding on to their freedom: from the medieval kingdom of Duklja and the Crnojevi rulers of Cetinje, through centuries of prince-bishops, to a 19th-century principality, a short-lived kingdom, Yugoslavia and independence in 2006.

1042

Duklja breaks free

Stefan Vojislav, a local ruler, led a revolt and won a great victory over a Byzantine army near Bar. His state, Duklja, covered much of the south of today's Montenegro.

1077

A king of Duklja

Pope Gregory VII recognised Mihailo, Vojislav's son, as king of Duklja. Over the next century the name Zeta gradually replaced Duklja.

1482

Cetinje is founded

Ivan Crnojevi, ruler of Zeta, moved his court up into the hills to a field below Mount Loven that was easier to defend. There he built a court and, in 1484, a monastery. The town of Cetinje grew around them.

1494

Books printed in Cetinje

Monks at the Crnojevi printing house in Cetinje finished printing the Oktoih, a book of Orthodox church hymns, in red and black. The press worked from 1493 to 1496 and printed five church books.

1496

Zeta falls to the Ottomans

The Ottomans conquered Zeta and ended the rule of the Crnojevi family. The mountain clans, however, kept much of their freedom, while Venice held the Bay of Kotor and much of the coast.

1516

Rule of the prince-bishops

The clans chose a vladika, an Orthodox bishop, as their leader. For more than three centuries Montenegro was ruled by prince-bishops from Cetinje.

1696

The Petrovi-Njegoš family takes power

The office of prince-bishop became hereditary in the Petrovi-Njegoš family from the village of Njeguši. Because bishops could not marry, it usually passed from uncle to nephew.

1847

The Mountain Wreath is published

Prince-Bishop Petar II Petrovi-Njegoš published his epic poem The Mountain Wreath, written in Cetinje the year before. It is still regarded as a masterpiece of South Slavic literature.

1858

Victory at Grahovac

Montenegrin forces led by Grand Duke Mirko Petrovi-Njegoš defeated an Ottoman army at Grahovac. Afterwards the border between Montenegro and the Ottoman Empire was formally marked out.

1878

Independence recognised in Berlin

On 13 July 1878 the Congress of Berlin recognised Montenegro as an independent state. The country roughly doubled in size and gained the port of Bar. Montenegro still celebrates 13 July as Statehood Day.

1910

Montenegro becomes a kingdom

Prince Nikola, who had ruled since 1860, proclaimed Montenegro a kingdom and became its first and only king.

1918

Union with Serbia

After the First World War, with King Nikola in exile, an assembly in Podgorica voted to unite Montenegro with Serbia. Days later it became part of the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, later called Yugoslavia.

1941

The 13 July uprising

Three months after Axis forces occupied Yugoslavia, a large armed uprising broke out in Montenegro against the Italian occupation. Within days most of the countryside was freed, although the Italians later regained control.

1979

The great earthquake

On 15 April 1979 a powerful earthquake struck the coast. It badly damaged the old towns of Budva, Kotor, Bar and Ulcinj, and in Budva's Old Town only 8 of about 400 buildings were left unharmed.

2006

Independence again

In a referendum on 21 May 2006, 55.5% of voters chose independence from the union with Serbia, just above the 55% needed. Parliament declared independence on 3 June, and Montenegro joined the United Nations on 28 June.

2017

Montenegro joins NATO

On 5 June 2017 Montenegro became a member of NATO. It had begun talks to join the European Union in 2012.

What people eat in Montenegro

Montenegrin food follows the landscape. On the coast it is Mediterranean, with olive oil, fish, seafood and a clear Italian touch. In the mountains it is hearty shepherd's food: lamb, cornmeal, potatoes, rich cheeses and kajmak, a salted cream. Turkish, Hungarian and Central European cooking have all left their mark. Bread comes with every meal, lunch usually starts with a clear soup, and a meal most often ends with a piece of seasonal fruit, while sweets are served on their own with coffee.

Njeguši ham (njeguški pršut)

Njeguši, a village on the slopes of Mount Lovćen above Kotor

Dry-cured ham, lightly smoked over beech wood and dried in the cool mountain air. It is sliced very thin and served uncooked as a cold starter, often with Njeguši cheese.

Pljevlja cheese (pljevaljski sir)

Pljevlja, in the far north

A salted, aged white cheese made from cow's milk. It is served as part of a cold starter platter.

Kaamak (kaamak)

The northern mountains

A thick, filling porridge of cornmeal and crushed potatoes, stirred with cheese and kajmak until smooth. It is traditionally eaten with a glass of cold milk, buttermilk or yoghurt.

Cicvara (cicvara)

The northern mountains

Cornmeal slowly cooked in kajmak or fresh cream until the fat rises to the top. It is very rich and is eaten for breakfast or as a hearty meal in the mountains.

Carp from Lake Skadar (krap)

Lake Skadar

Fresh or smoked carp from Lake Skadar, a speciality of central Montenegro. Small smoked and dried fish called ukljeva (bleak) are also a lakeside speciality.

Black risotto (crni rižot)

The Adriatic coast

Rice cooked with cuttlefish and its ink, which turns the whole dish a glossy black. It is one of the classic seafood dishes of the coast, together with grilled squid and octopus salad.

Brudet (brudet or brodet)

The Montenegrin coast, also Dalmatia and Italy's Adriatic shore

A fish stew made in one pot with several kinds of sea fish, tomato, onion and wine, often served with polenta to soak up the sauce.

Stuffed peppers (punjene paprike)

All of Montenegro

Bell peppers filled with minced meat and rice, then baked or simmered in a tomato sauce. A common home-cooked main course all over the country.

Burek (burek)

All of Montenegro, as across the former Yugoslavia

Layers of thin pastry filled with minced meat, cheese or spinach, baked in a large round pan and cut into wedges. It is the most popular fast food in the country and a favourite breakfast.

Priganice (priganice)

All of Montenegro

Small fritters of yeasted dough, fried until golden and puffed. They are served with honey, cheese or jam, for breakfast, with coffee, or as a treat for guests.

Vranac red wine (vranac)

The Lake Skadar area, especially Crmnica

A deep red wine from Vranac, Montenegro's own grape. Vranac is the most planted grape in the country and is considered its most important.

Grape brandy (lozova rakija, or loza)

The coast and the south; plum brandy in the north

A strong clear brandy made from grapes, often homemade, and a local favourite to sip before an evening out. In the north, plum brandy (šljivovica) and apple brandy are more common.

Nikši beer (nikšiko pivo)

Nikši

A pale lager from the Trebjesa brewery in Nikši, by far the most popular beer in Montenegro.

GOOD MANNERS

At the table

- Bread is served with every meal.

- Before eating, people wish each other 'Dobar tek' (enjoy your meal).
- When glasses are raised, people say 'Živjeli' (cheers).
- Lunch at midday usually starts with a clear soup.
- Turkish coffee is almost always offered on any visit to a Montenegrin home, however short.
- Sweets are not usually eaten straight after a meal. They are served on their own, with coffee.

Kaamak

A thick, filling porridge of cornmeal and crushed potatoes, stirred with cheese and kajmak until smooth. It is traditionally eaten with a glass of cold milk, buttermilk or yoghurt.

Ingredients

- 500 g floury potatoes, peeled and cut in chunks
- 250 g fine cornmeal (polenta)
- About 1.2 litres water and 1 teaspoon salt
- 150 g kajmak, or 100 g butter mixed with 3 tablespoons sour cream
- 150 g mild white cheese, such as a young sheep's cheese or feta, crumbled
- Cold milk, buttermilk or yoghurt, to serve

Method

1. Boil the potatoes in the salted water in a large, heavy pot for about 15 minutes, until soft. Do not pour off the water.
2. Lower the heat. Sprinkle in the cornmeal slowly, a handful at a time, without stirring, so that it forms a layer on top. Cover and cook gently for 10 minutes.
3. With a strong wooden spoon, mash and stir the potatoes and cornmeal together for 5 to 10 minutes, until thick and smooth. Add a little hot water if it gets too stiff.
4. Stir in the kajmak or butter and cream, then the cheese, until it melts in.
5. Spoon onto warm plates and serve at once, with a glass of cold milk, buttermilk or yoghurt.

Black risotto

Rice cooked with cuttlefish and its ink, which turns the whole dish a glossy black. It is one of the classic seafood dishes of the coast, together with grilled squid and octopus salad.

Ingredients

- 600 g cleaned cuttlefish or squid, cut in small pieces
- 2 to 3 sachets of cuttlefish or squid ink (about 8 g), from a fishmonger
- 300 g risotto rice
- 1 onion, finely chopped, and 3 garlic cloves, crushed
- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 150 ml dry white wine
- About 1 litre hot fish stock
- A handful of chopped parsley, salt and pepper

Method

1. Warm the olive oil in a wide pan and cook the onion gently until soft. Add the garlic for one minute.
2. Add the cuttlefish and cook for about 10 minutes, stirring, until it releases its juices and they start to reduce.
3. Pour in the wine and let it bubble for 2 minutes. Stir in the rice so that every grain is coated.
4. Add the ink and a ladle of hot stock. Keep adding stock a ladle at a time, stirring often, for about 18 to 20 minutes, until the rice is tender and creamy.
5. Season with salt and pepper, stir in the parsley and a little more olive oil, and rest for 2 minutes before serving.

Stuffed peppers

Bell peppers filled with minced meat and rice, then baked or simmered in a tomato sauce. A common home-cooked main course all over the country.

Ingredients

- 8 medium bell peppers, tops cut off and seeds removed
- 500 g minced beef, or half beef and half pork
- 100 g long-grain rice, rinsed
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon sweet paprika, salt and black pepper
- 3 tablespoons oil
- 700 ml tomato passata mixed with 300 ml water

Method

1. Fry the onion in the oil until soft. Let it cool a little, then mix it with the meat, rice, paprika, salt and pepper.
2. Fill the peppers loosely with the mixture, leaving a little space at the top because the rice swells.
3. Stand the peppers upright in a deep pot or baking dish and pour the tomato mixture around them.
4. Cover and simmer gently, or bake at 180°C, for about 1 hour, until the peppers are soft and the rice and meat are fully cooked.
5. Serve hot with bread and a spoonful of sour cream or yoghurt.

Priganice

Small fritters of yeasted dough, fried until golden and puffed. They are served with honey, cheese or jam, for breakfast, with coffee, or as a treat for guests.

Ingredients

- 500 g plain flour
- 7 g sachet of dried yeast and 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- About 400 ml lukewarm water
- Sunflower oil for deep frying
- Honey, jam or soft white cheese, to serve

Method

1. Mix the flour, yeast, sugar and salt in a large bowl. Stir in the water to make a soft, sticky dough, a little thicker than a batter.
2. Cover the bowl with a cloth and leave it somewhere warm for about 1 hour, until the dough has doubled.
3. Heat the oil in a deep pan to about 170°C. Never leave hot oil alone, and keep children away from the pan.
4. Dip a spoon in water, scoop up small pieces of dough and drop them into the oil. Fry for 2 to 3 minutes, turning, until golden on all sides.
5. Drain on kitchen paper and serve warm with honey, jam or cheese.

Useful phrases

Dobro jutro

DOH-broh YOO-troh · Good morning

Dobar dan

DOH-bahr dahn · Good day, hello

Dobro vee

DOH-broh VEH-cheh · Good evening

Laku no

LAH-koo nohch · Good night

Dovienja

doh-vee-JEH-nyah · Goodbye

Kako si?

KAH-koh see · How are you? (informal)

Dobro, hvala na pitanju

DOH-broh, HVAH-lah nah PEE-tah-nyoo · Fine, thank you for asking

Drago mi je da vas upoznam

DRAH-goh mee yeh dah vahs OO-poz-nahm · Nice to meet you

Nema na emu

NEH-mah nah CHEH-moo · You're welcome

Izvinjavam se

eez-vee-NYAH-vahm seh · Excuse me, or I'm sorry

Da li priate engleski?

dah lee PREE-chah-teh EN-gleh-skee · Do you speak English?

Ja ne razumijem

yah neh rah-ZOO-mee-yem · I don't understand

Koliko košta ovo?

KOH-lee-koh KOHSH-tah OH-voh · How much is this?

e je WC?

JEH yeh veh-TSEH · Where is the toilet?

Dobar tek

DOH-bahr TEHK · Enjoy your meal

Živjeli!

ZHEE-vyeh-lee · Cheers!

Bilo je izvorsno

BEE-loh yeh EEZ-vrs-noh · It was excellent (delicious)

Raun, molim

RAH-choon, MOH-leem · The bill, please

Upomo!

OO-poh-mohch · Help!

Things you might not know

1. Both names of the country, Montenegro and Crna Gora, mean 'Black Mountain'. They refer to Mount Loven, which looked black when it was covered in dense forest.
2. Montenegro uses the euro even though it is not a member of the European Union or the eurozone. It switched to the German mark in 1999 and simply adopted the euro in 2002.
3. King Nikola I married five of his daughters to princes and kings, which earned him the nickname 'the father-in-law of Europe'. His grandsons included King Alexander I of Yugoslavia and King Umberto II of Italy.
4. In 1494 monks in Cetinje finished printing the Oktoih, a book of church hymns printed in red and black Cyrillic letters. 108 copies of it survive.
5. Kotor has so many cats that they have become a symbol of the town. It has a cat museum, cat shops and a Cats' Square, and locals leave food and water out for them.
6. Every year at sunset on 22 July, people from Perast row out and throw stones into the sea around Our Lady of the Rocks, slowly making the man-made island bigger. The custom is called fašinada.
7. The Tara River Canyon is up to about 1,300 metres deep, one of the deepest river canyons in Europe.
8. The independence referendum of 21 May 2006 needed 55% to pass. Independence won 55.5%, and according to the electoral commission the line was crossed by only about 2,300 votes.
9. Water polo is the national sport. Montenegro's first Olympic medal came in 2012, a silver won by the women's handball team.
10. The Montenegrin alphabet has two letters that Serbian and Croatian do not: and . You can see one in the word 'utra', tomorrow.
11. Montenegro celebrates Statehood Day on 13 July, the day in 1878 when the Congress of Berlin recognised it as the 27th independent state in the world.
12. The Montenegrin folk dance oro takes its name from 'orao', the eagle. Dancers move like eagles in a circle, and a performance can end with a

human pyramid of dancers standing on each other's shoulders.

- 13.** Medieval carved tombstones called steci stand in graveyards near Žabljak and Plužine. Together with sites in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia, they became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2016.

TALK ABOUT IT

Questions for the group

- Have you ever been to Montenegro, or has someone in your family? What do you remember?
- Have you ever tasted Njeguši ham or Pljevlja cheese? What is a dish you remember from a trip?
- The great earthquake (1979). Do you remember hearing about it? Where were you then?
- Have you seen The Old Town and Walls of Kotor, in person or in pictures? Which famous place would you most like to see?
- If you could spend one day in any city of Montenegro, which would it be and why?
- Which fact surprised you the most today?

QUIZ

How well do you know Montenegro?

Circle the right answer. The answers are on the last page.

1. Cetinje is best known today as Montenegro's...

- A) Highest town
- B) Seat of parliament
- C) Old royal capital
- D) Largest seaport

2. What gives black risotto its colour?

- A) Burnt onions
- B) Cuttlefish ink
- C) Red wine
- D) Black olives

3. Montenegro's best-known beer comes from the Trebjesa brewery in which town?

- A) Žabljak
- B) Kotor
- C) Nikši
- D) Ulcinj

4. For more than three centuries, from 1516, Montenegro was led by prince-bishops from Cetinje.

- A) True
- B) False

5. What is "hljeb"?

- A) Bread
- B) Water
- C) Fish
- D) Cheese

6. The name of the Montenegrin folk dance oro comes from the word for wolf.

- A) True
- B) False

7. How was the island of Our Lady of the Rocks made?

- A) By people piling up stones and sinking old ships
- B) By a river delta
- C) By a volcanic eruption
- D) By the 1979 earthquake

8. As of September 2026, within how long of arrival must every visitor be registered?

- A) 24 hours
- B) 72 hours
- C) 7 days
- D) 30 days

9. Which animals have become a symbol of Kotor?

- A) Cats
- B) Donkeys
- C) Goats
- D) Pelicans

10. What does "utra" mean?

- A) Yesterday
- B) Tonight
- C) Today
- D) Tomorrow

11. Priganice are small fried fritters of yeasted dough, served with honey, cheese or jam.

- A) True
- B) False

12. Durmitor National Park is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

- A) True
- B) False

Quiz answers

1. C) Old royal capital

Cetinje is the old royal capital. Podgorica is the capital today and has the parliament, Bar is the main seaport and Žabljak is the high mountain town.

2. B) Cuttlefish ink

Cuttlefish ink turns the rice a glossy black. It is a classic dish of the Adriatic coast.

3. C) Nikši

The Trebjesa brewery is in Nikši, and its Nikšiko beer is by far the most popular in the country.

4. True

True. From 1516 until 1852 Montenegro was led by prince-bishops, called vladikas, based in Cetinje.

5. A) Bread

Hljeb is bread, and it comes with every meal.

6. False

False. Oro comes from orao, the eagle, and dancers move like eagles.

7. A) By people piling up stones and sinking old ships

It is man-made: by people piling up stones and sinking old ships loaded with rocks. Stones are still added every year on 22 July.

8. A) 24 hours

Visitors must be registered within 24 hours. Hotels usually do it for you, but in private accommodation make sure it is done.

9. A) Cats

Cats are a symbol of Kotor, which has a cat museum and a Cats' Square.

10. D) Tomorrow

utra means tomorrow. Today is danas.

11. True

True. They are a favourite with coffee, for breakfast or as a treat for guests.

12. True

True. Durmitor became a World Heritage Site in 1980. As of 2026 Montenegro has four World Heritage Sites.

Montenegro visa page

Name: _____ Date: _____



Next stops

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<https://worldstroll.com/countries/montenegro>