

ORGANICFOOD

Healthy Living

Serbia

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Organic Food Serbia

Green Revolution

Throughout the long history of human civilisation man took his food from nature. However, 20th century saw a fast development of technology in agriculture, and therefore also mass utilisation of artificial inputs. The organic farming movement emerged in response to this trend and is now known by the name Green Revolution. The term “organic farming” was coined by Lord Northbourne. In his book “Look to the Land,” he describes an organic farm as a living whole, an organism, as opposed to the use of “chemical farming”, which relies upon imported, artificial fertility. Today, and within the wider ecological movement, the ideas of organic food production are honoured all over the globe. Many countries in the world have already gone a long way in developing organic farming and see it as their future. The European Union has also, in its Common Agricultural Policy, adopted the organic farming approach

as a model for sustainable agriculture. The production of organic, healthy and nutritious produce, has for a long time now been the reality of farming in Serbia and this process will continue into Serbia’s future. More and more people – both producers and consumers – have come to realise the benefits of farming that respects and values soil, water, plants, animals, people, natural resources, and ultimately respects the entire planet.

Organic Farming Principles

Organic farming is based on several fundamental principles. Natural resources, such as land and water, are used reasonably and with care, in a renewable way and with no risk of contamination. All genetically modified organisms are banned, and the use of artificial substances is strictly limited. Soil fertility as well as plant and animal resilience are sustained and enhanced in a natural way.

Organic farming methods adapt to local circumstances, taking into account the specific characteristics of each region. That is why organic farming favours old varieties and breeds and the traditional way of nurturing growth. All these principles are in place and are aimed at producing safe, healthy and high quality foods, which will provide a better life for present and future generations.

“Zdravo, živo!”, or Be Healthy and Full of Life!

The global movement of turning back to nature and organic farming has found a conducive environment in Serbia: grains, various vegetables, medicinal plants and herbs, apples, plums, raspberries, blackberries, forest fruits and green meadows, herds of autochthonous breeds... are all grown and cared for in harmony with Nature and under the watchful eye of science. “The advantages of Serbia are uncontaminated soil, prominent research, development by educational institutions... and a long tradition in growing and processing products which are high in demand.”*

In addition, Serbia has been a farming country for centuries. The wisdom of our predecessors who acted in harmony with Nature in the past has survived to this very day as a living legacy.

Today, the tradition and science work hand in hand. In Serbia there is also a broad network of organic farmer associations which, in turn, are leading the way of the “Green Revolution” in health food production, based on modern science and technological know-how.

Throughout Serbia it is not hard to discover tables overflowing with fresh organic food and produce made using traditional recipes of yesteryear which are accompanied by rich and diverse gastronomic dishes of “soul food”. Visitors and locals alike, can travel throughout the country and discover almost virgin nature, staying overnight in traditional salaš farms in the plains or in mountain lodges called vayats, ethno-households and rest houses in villages – as people discover the healthy, green and hos-

pitabile country of Serbia, where people greet one another with two meaningful words of hello, “zdravo, živo!” or “be healthy and full of life”, since being alive means the same as being healthy.*

*Quoted from a CIZ study



Vojvodina

Grains and Vegetable Gardens of Pannonia

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The greatest reaches of Vojvodina are fertile lands with an abundance of water. The gifts of Nature predestined this region for agriculture, and therefore it is no wonder that organic farming in Serbia started in Vojvodina. This region, and more precisely, Subotica was the birthplace for spreading the ideas of “green economy” and organic farming. This town in the northernmost part of Bačka was the first in the country to have products stamped with the organic official logo and the first internationally awarded bio-farm. And that is why this journey through Organic Serbia starts from the rural surroundings of Subotica.



Tourist Organisation of Vojvodina
Phone: +381 21 452 910, 4720 508
www.vojvodinaonline.com



Bread From the Sands and Hand Grown Teas

The map of organic farmers in this region features many villages, but let us dwell for a bit on the village of Ljutovo, home to a family of many times awarded organic farmers and on the light, sandy soil these dedicated people grow cereals, various vegetables and chilli peppers. Their salaš specialty are watermill organic stone-ground grains. The salaš is open for visitors, and organic produce from this farm may be found on the greenmarkets in Subotica, Novi Sad and Belgrade.

In the village of Orom, in the municipality of Kanjiža, yet another gem in organic produce is on offer from the north of Serbia – a farm where herbs and aromatic plants are grown. Hard-working herbalists work the fields with their

own hands and know every little detail about the medicinal properties of the herbs they produce. Yarrow, mint, mother of thyme, nettle, marigold... are made into herbal teas that each have a beneficial effects on health. The farm is covered in flowers of many different varieties and colours providing many fragrances together with medicinal herbs and aromatic plants, and boasting a long tradition of cultivation which has existed for more than a century.

Tourism Organisation of Kanjiža Municipality
Phone: +381 24 875 414, 854 412
www.kanjizatourism.org.rs

Festival of Organic Products

“Biofest” – the International Festival of Organic Products is held in Subotica every year. The festival’s events include an exhibition of organic products and visits to farms and salašes of reputable producers. Visits to greenmarkets are a real delight and it’s here where you can also find organic products from nearby farms and some can now be bought on-line through the Organska pijaca (Organic Market) portal.

Goods of Nature - Palić and Ludaš

Windy Lakes of the Plain

Palić Lake is also known as the “Blue Eye of the Plain”. The lake water and mud is known to have curative properties and by the mid-19th century a park was developed, later turning it into a fashionable summer resort. Over time, urban overdevelopment disturbed the ecological balance of the lake and it was the movement for the “green economy and organic farming” that thankfully initiated its rehabilitation. Although its natural balance was somewhat disturbed, today, the exceptional tranquillity of Palić, its well cultivated parks and specific architecture, provide a pleasant place for rest and relaxation.

An interesting alternative to Palić, may be the neighbouring lake and special nature reserve

of Ludaš. Lake Ludaš is an oasis of pure nature. Overgrown in high reeds, it is well known for its world of marsh birds. The shores of this unique lake also feature authentic village architecture. It is interesting to see the archaic houses of Šupljak, the oldest salaš-like settlement in the area.

It is the salašes and chardas (old inns), that are a trademark of ethno-tourism in the region. Traditional dishes are prepared at the salašes, autochthonous wines “s peska” (“from the sands”) and domestic fruit brandies are served. All the salašes offer unique traditional hospitality, gourmet cuisine with authentic mark of the north of Bačka and warm ‘home-like’ atmosphere. At many of them, the offer includes

organic products with some domestic products that, although they are not certified as organic, come from small farms where food is produced in the old-fashioned way, without using synthetic substances.

Tourism Organisation of the Town of Subotica

Phone: +381 24 670 350

Museums of Bread, Tobacco and Honey

In addition to the usual museums and the ones that you can expect to find in big cities, Vojvodina has a true collection of unusual museums. The Museum of Bread in Srem village of Pećinci, the Museum of Tobacco and the Blacksmith Craft in Telečka, a village near Sombor and the Museum of Apiculture kept by the family Živanović from Sremski Karlovci – are just a few of them.

Tourism Organisation of Sremski Karlovci Municipality

Phone: +381 21 882 127, 883 855



Land of Dark Complexion and Red Peppers



In the Serbian language fertile land is called *crnica*, black soil – it is dark, almost black in colour from the organic substances it contains. The region of Western Bačka is known by this fruitful land. Travelling across Organic Serbia leads us to Sombor, the centre of Western Bačka region. Due to its position in the landscape and being as “flat as a pancake”, Sombor is called also Ravangrad – the ‘Flat City’. However, at the eastern borders of the town, the plain withdraws and is confronted with the rolling hills of the Telečka highlands. In the old days tobacco was grown on these hillocks, and today the area is famous above all for its production of chilli peppers. The highlands with the village of the same name, Telečka, is the place where one of best chilli peppers to be found in Europe are grown. The village has a long tradition of growing this culture – a mill for processing peppers has been in place since 1939. Five or six years ago its quality and taste were discovered in Europe as well, thanks to the unusual quirk of fate: at the evaluation organised by a famous organic sector company, Ecoland from Germany, where there happened to be a woman from Telečka. Despite large competition, her paprika was given the highest grade and today, the tasteful red powder with the logo of the local association of organic producers is used to spice up the dishes all over Europe.

Food Festival in the Green Crown Town

Every September the town of Sombor hosts the International Festival of Food and Ethno-Food that promotes organic farming. The tourist offer of Sombor salašes is developed within the concept of organic food and promotion of autochthonous products. Visits should be made to some of the salašes, and tasting the Sombor “slagani” (layered) cheese ripening in wooden barrels is a must, as well as the popular Somborka – a variety

of hot chilli peppers. The town itself is the greenest town in Vojvodina. Its trademark is bođoš – a common hackberry or nettletree: more than a century ago, the seedlings of an American hackberry were brought over from the Mississippi valley – and 18,000 trees have been planted since then with alleys more than a hundred kilometres long. Due to such greenery, every citizen is said to be wearing a “green crown”. Especially notable sites of the town include Carriages Square (Fijakerskiplac) and the Town Hall, as the central architectural symbol of the town,

and there is also a gallery of the great Serbian painter Milan Konjović, where, if we are to refer back to the main thread of our story, you can find paintings in fiery colours, depicting fruit of the fields of “blazing Vojvodina”.

Tourism Organisation of the Town of Sombor

Phone: +381 25 434 330, 434 350

E-mail: info@visitsombor.org

www.visitsombor.org



Goods of Nature – Upper Danubian Region

Between Land and Water

The tourist signposts of Western Bačka have the Upper Danubian Region on them in capital letters. The wide spaces of the reserves feature vast meadows, and bodies of water are covered by flowers of white and yellow water-lilies. This area is literally “between land and water” and they, together create and nourish abundant plants and high forests. Due to its dense foliage, this area is often compared to Amazonia. It is visited by fisherman, bird lovers, boaters and



all those who like true nature. The trademark of the reserve is the white-tailed eagle – the largest eagle in Europe. The boglands of Gornje Podunavlje (the Upper Danubian region) are home to one of the last herds of red deer. This area is quite an exceptional eco-tourist destination, crossed also by the paths of two cycling routes – the international Danube cycling track and the regional track known as the “Pannonian Route of Peace”.



Organic Centre in Selenča

Specialised centres play a unique role in the development of Organic Serbia. One such centre is located in Selenča, in the municipality of Bač. Ethnically, Selenča is almost purely a Slovak village. “Life must be based on what you already have, and not on what you lack”, this is the motto of a successful agro-company from these parts, making use of the legacy of the Slovak spirit of diligence and unassuming modesty. The company has their own brand of juices made from organic beetroot, apples, carrots... and various vegetable salads. From the organic world of Selenča, a short side trip away is the town of Bač with its valuable cultural and historical monuments including a medieval fortress of the same name and one of the largest to be found in Pannonia. There is also a special nature reserve called Karađorđevo which is located near Bač, and is home to many rare autochthonous species of plants. Game can also be found here and is popular with hunting tourism. Karađorđevo is also known by its paddock, as well as a long tradition of exclusive hunting tourism.

*Tourism Organisation of Bač
Municipality
Phone: +381 21 772 222*

Novi Sad – Agricultural Centre of the Region

Organic and Conventional

In the agribusiness sector, one of the most important events in the country is the Novi Sad Agricultural Fair which is an important meeting point to promote ideas and the experiences of organic farming. As a leader in agriculture and a centre for promoting new ideas, the capital of Vojvodina is the first town in Serbia where a special greenmarket for organic produce, “My Salaš”, was opened, and also the country’s first specialised organic food shop.

Novi Sad is a lively urban centre with its impressive Petrovaradin fortress on the banks of the Danube and close by is Sremski Karlovci famed for its architecture and home to the country’s

Bee Museum reflecting its importance for honey in the surrounding area. The National Park of Fruška Gora also close by, offers an escape from city life with its many baroque Orthodox monasteries. During this urban intermezzo you can take a nice walk through the Fish Market or Futoška greenmarket, where you can see all the colours and wealth of fruits of Vojvodina.

Tourism Organisation of the Town of Novi Sad
Phone: +381 21 6617 343, 421 811
www.turizamns.rs



All Colours of Lettuce

A family living in the nearby village of Kisač and producing many kinds of organic vegetables is known above all by their great selection of lettuces – they grow the usual green ones, but also specific ones, brown, red and purple coloured, which are very nutritious. The range of their products includes radicchio, broccoli, zucchini, Swiss chard, spinach... Such versatility comes from applying crop rotation – growing different species during the year – which is one of the basic methods of organic farming. The family offers their produce at the Novi Sad organic greenmarket.

Goods of Nature – National Park Fruška Gora

Tame Mountain Treasury

Vojvodina's unique mountain literally sprouts up from the plain. Gentle slopes, woods, famous vineyards and orchards – its natural treasures can all be found in the vicinity. The largest linden forest of Europe is also here, and Fruška Gora is home to rare mushrooms, orchids, birds and game. Since Roman times vines have been grown on the slopes of Fruška Gora. The vineyard and winemaking tradition has been preserved and developed, and Fruška Gora wines are a highly praised national brand today. Spacious orchards with peach, apricot and apple trees are part of the Fruška Gora landscape, and although practically no fruit growers apply organic farming methods, a lot of producers apply the principles of Good Agricultural Practice that significantly restrict the use of chemicals.



National Park Fruška Gora
Phone: +381 21 463 666, 463 667
www.npfruskagora.co.rs

Nature Park – Stara Tisa

First “Green” Dairy

In Serbia today, organic agriculture mostly relies upon small farmers and cooperatives. It is still a rare thing to see larger agro-companies joining the “Green Revolution”. That is why an example of a large agro-system accepting green agriculture as their general model is a significant one. Under the motto “a thousand cows on a thousand hectares” a company from Čurug completes a full circle – they grow the crops needed for feeding the cows themselves, they have built a plant for organic feed, and the final objective is to open an organic dairy, a unique one in Serbia.

The first chapter of our journey through Organic Vojvodina ends in Čurug, on a farm where the organic dairy-to-be will stand, and you are invited by all means to see the only remaining windmill in Čurug, “Rođina”, and also a natural gem of the area:



Biserno Ostrvo – Pearl Island

A long meander of the river Tisa separated from the main stream at the end of 19th century. Now, in the area of its old course, there are shallow waters, reed beds, meadows and woods. Today’s nature park is located in that meander and preserves rich and rare wildlife. The most important treasure of the park is the white water-lily, listed as a natural rarity of

Serbia. Biserno Ostrvo (Pearl Island) is located between the old and the new course of the river Tisa and is enriched with fertile agricultural land which is well suited for growing vegetables and fruit. Biserno Ostrvo is also renowned for its high quality aromatic wine, Muscat Croquant.

*Tourism Organisation of Bečej
Municipality
Phone: +381 21 6910 404*



Western Serbia

Land of Raspberry and Fruits of the Forest

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The hilly and mountainous regions of this part of Serbia form not only a part of the landscape but reap the fruits of its environment too. The Drina Valley (Podrinjske) mountains, mountains of Valjevo, Zlatibor, Tara, Zlatar, Golija are just a few many mountains in Western Serbia. Forests and woods, meadows, glades, pastures, small towns, villages and hamlets make up the picture of the western parts. The river Drina is a hallmark of the area and is one of the most beautiful European rivers. Except for the green course of the Drina, Western Serbia has no larger rivers, but it has waters in abundance – wells, brooks and mountain streams. Fruits and crops suitable for higher land are mostly grown in this region. Our thematic journey through the western parts starts in the picturesque and ecologically clean Azbukovica.



*Tourism Organisation of the Western
Serbia Region*

Phone: +381 31 500 155

www.westserbia.org

www.zapadnasrbija.org.rs



Cold Storage in Orchards

More than two decades ago, in the crystal clear natural environment of Ljubovija, an enterprising man founded a company for off-taking, freezing and the processing of berries. He gathered fruit growers from the area and taught them modern production methods. Today, surrounded by raspberry and blackberry plantations, the cold storage facility of this company processes organic fruit of highest quality. This company is among Serbia's leading exporters and regularly exhibits at the BioFach – the largest world fair of organic produce.

Natural Treasures of Neighbouring Mountains

Rivers Clear as a Bell

Tornička Bobija, a part of Sokolske mountains, is not often found on tourist' itineraries. Its lookouts, woods and rivers are well known to enthusiastic mountaineers and extreme sports fans. Breathtaking rivers run through the mountainous landscape of this region: the river Trešnjica canyon is where griffon vultures make their nests; the river Tribuča clashes with the cliffs; the blue-green Ljuboviđa's canyon creates a mosaic of striking scenery and the river Gradac proudly holds the title of Europe's

cleanest river. A detour from nature is a visit to the mediaeval fortress of Soko Grad (Falcon Town) and monastery Soko, positioned in the picturesque slopes of Sokolske mountains. It is of interest that the fortress of Soko Grad has never been conquered.

*Tourism Organisation of Ljubovija
Municipality
Phone: +381 15 661 050
www.tolj.rs*



Raspberry – Red Gold of Serbia

Raspberries are key export product of Serbia and therefore often called “red gold”. Serbia is amongst leaders in producing and exporting raspberries in European countries and worldwide. Due to its unique taste, quality and colour, this recognisable Serbian brand has received many awards from all over the world. It is interesting that raspberries from Serbia travel far, even managing to reach the Far East.



Arilje – Raspberry Capital

Among the hillocks where two clean mountain rivers, the Rzav and the Moravica, run their course, the small town of Arilje is located, known as the hub of Serbian raspberry growing. The “Ariljska” raspberry is the national brand which is currently undergoing the official procedure for protecting the designation of origin, and to cover the wider area where this precious fruit is grown. Most of the local population is involved in producing the “red gold”,

Tourism Organisation of Ivanjica
Municipality
Phone: +381 32 665 085, 650 290
www.ivatourism.org

and out of respect for the fruit that provides a livelihood for them and their families, the people have erected a Monument to the Raspberry in the centre of the town. In the vicinity of the “Bronze Raspberry” there is a priceless cultural and historical monument of the town - the Saint Achilles’ church dating from 13th century which was erected by Serbian King Dragutin from the Nemanjić dynasty.

A Million-Plum-Tree Orchard

Tourism Organisation „Podgorina“
Osečina
Phone: +381 14 452 311

Every autumn the Plum Fair is held in the village of Osečina, promoting the “Serbian Queen of Fruit” and the traditional products made from plums such as plum brandy or slivovitz, prunes, jams and preserves. It is worth noting that there are as many as one million plum trees in the area of Podgorina. The workshops and

presentations during the Fair promote the ideas of organic plum production and processing. In Europe in particular, the high quality of Serbian organic prunes is recognised and they are an essential ingredient to the best known mueslis, fruit yoghurts and jams. The yoghurt with Serbian plums can be bought even in Japan.





World of Organic Mushrooms

In the small town of Arilje can be found a whole array of products originating from the forests of Western Serbia. The assortment includes dried penny buns, fresh and dried golden chanterelles, dried black morels - all costly and delicious mushrooms, as well as highly appreciated black chanterelles, which are used to add flavour to dishes. Mushrooms are sun dried in order to preserve their taste and their beneficial minerals.

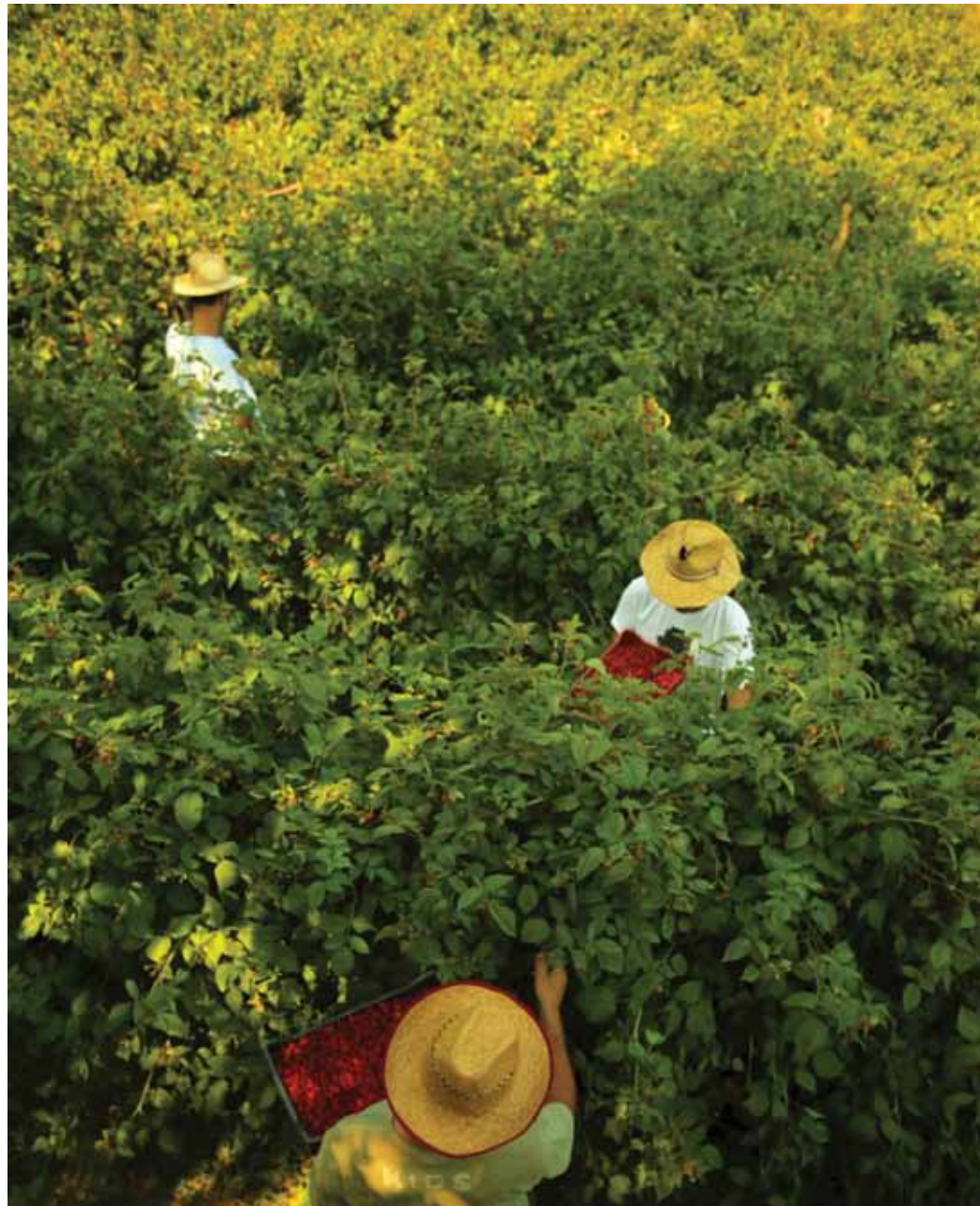


Future is Organic

Fruit That Feeds Families

Formerly a small family business with headquarters in one of the best known ethno-villages in Zlatibor area – Sirogojno, thanks to knowledge, hard work, but raspberries as well, this company has become now one of the leading national exporters of frozen fruits. Their rich organic offer includes raspberries. The list of organic producers in the area contains also a company from Lučani that attracted and gathered together more than one thousand small farmers that now grow organic raspberries and blackberries under their wing. Many families from Zlatibor and Dragačevo area, having joined cooperatives, make a living out of the fruits, mostly growing raspberries.

Tourism Organisation „Zlatibor“
Phone: +381 31 841 646
www.zlatibor.org.rs



Goods of Nature in Western Serbia

Beauty with no Competition



Western Serbia has many places of interest to the visitor including Tara National Park; the river Drina canyon; the Nature Park of Mokra Gora with its unique museum and its tourist narrow-gauge railway “Šarganska Osmica” (Šargan Eight); Zlatibor Mountain and the open-air museum Staro Selo (Old Village) in Sirogojno; the UNESCO protected biosphere reserve and nature park of Golija, Ivanjički Javor and Mučanj; the curative waters of Pribojska Spa and the Pešterska Highlands.

The area is also home to the mediaeval monastery of Mileševa and the famous fresco White Angel, monastery Rača on the Drina and ethno-town Drvengrad (Wooden Town) of the eminent director Emir Kusturica.

In addition to organic “rewards” from the area such as Ariljska raspberries and wild mushrooms, quintessential to the tastes of this region may also be found in prosciutto from Užice, cheese from Zlatar, curative juniper brandy and a special type of flat bread lepinja often eaten with kajmak.

National Park Tara
Phone: +381 60 6560 141
www.tara-planina.com





Central Serbia

Strawberries, Blueberries and a Taste of Forest



Central Serbia is dominated by Kopaonik – the largest mountain of Serbia. From Kopaonik the ranges of smaller mountains spread like spikes from the hub. This truly mountainous area with a harsh climate is well known for its curative waters and its health-friendly coniferous, beech and oak woods. Our journey through Organic Serbia continues on the eastern slopes of Kopaonik, in a small town of Brus, where old recipes are used to make perhaps the most delicious sweet in Serbia – wild strawberry confit or slatko.



National Park Kopaonik
Phone: +381 36 5471 011, 5471 229

Cooked Over Fire

Handpicked berries full of flavour that grow in large numbers on the slopes of Kopaonik are made into confit of quite unique taste. In order for it to be both delicious and nutritious, it is cooked in home-like atmosphere, in big pots, on wood-burning stoves... It is cooked slowly, for hours, just like this sweet, slatko, used to be prepared in days gone by. Wild strawberry slatko is produced by one of the leading Serbian food producing companies and it is a part of their range of organic products. Wild strawberry juice, also made by this company, was awarded at the World Juice 2008 as the best fruit juice in the world!



Forest Harvest

The most natural food in the world is certified by Nature herself. In the healthy forests and uninhabited high grounds of Kopaonik, Jastrebac, Goč, Željin... one of the local companies with headquarters in Kruševac has for almost three decades been harvesting the fruits of the forest. Applying modern technology, they have sourced penny buns, black morels, golden chanterelles and other mushrooms to create different variations of organic products: mushrooms in oil, dried mushrooms, fresh and frozen mushrooms. Fully committed to woods and forests, this company started also picking wild blueberries that the nutritionists often call the “opulent treasury of minerals and vitamins”.



Tourism Organisation of Kruševac
Phone: +381 37 440 332, 445 180

Fruits of All Colours

A large international company with head office in the Netherlands, specialising in organic produce, found their natural business partners in the fruit growers from Serbia. About seven hundred farmers from the areas near Brus, Blace and the village of Donje Grgure were attracted by their idea of organic farming. Half of them grow berries – strawberries, raspberries and blackberries, and the other half grow apples, pears, plums and cherries in their orchards. The fruit is grown under the supervision of agro-engineers from abroad. Although most of the fruits are to be dried or frozen, you can still get to taste them – welcoming hosts will surely pick a juicy fruit or two for you from their carefully cultivated orchards.

*Tourism Organisation of Brus
Municipality
Phone: +381 37 825 185*



Goods of Nature in Central Serbia

Mountains of Curative Waters

Mountain Kopaonik is a national park and a well known winter tourism centre in Serbia. It is from the volcanic rocks of Kopaonik and neighbouring mountains that curative waters flow. Natural treasures of this region are the spas built around these mineral water springs such as Jošanička, Mataruška, Vrnjačka and Ribarska to mention a few of them. The river Ibar gorge is one of the longest and most beautiful in Serbia. The ramparts of the mediaeval fort of Maglič offer lovely views of the fast-moving waters of this river and the entire surrounding landscape. A little farther south, in the area of Stari Ras, were the centre of mediaeval Serbia is located. Some of the most precious cultural and historical monuments from these times were built here. Worth visiting is the monastery complex of Studenica, part of the UNESCO cultural heritage list, and the nearby mediaeval monasteries of Žiča and Gradac. The basin between Kopaonik, Željini and Stolovi, and the banks of the river Zapadna Morava, are home to one of the best known Serbian vineyard areas – Župa Aleksandrovačka. Do taste the autochthonous fragrant Župa wine “Tamjanika” and, by all means, have a look at the collection about the history of wine-making kept by the Museum of Wines in Aleksandrovac.



Tourism Organisation of Kraljevo
Phone: +381 36 316 000, 311 192
www.jutok.org.rs

Tourism Organisation of Vrnjačka Banja
Phone: +381 36 611 106, 611 107

Tourism Organisation of Aleksandrovac Municipality
Phone: +381 37 3554 404



Diversity of Life



Far from the main roads and almost uninhabited, the mountains in this part of Serbia preserve the entire worlds of autochthonous plants, woods, wild and farm animals. They give full meaning to the term “preserved biodiversity”. Species of plants growing in Stara Planina are so diverse that they make up more than a third of the total flora of Serbia. The wondrous mountain of Rtanj, whose shape makes an almost perfect pyramid, is mentioned in many folk tales attributed to the healing powers to herbs growing there. And Suva Planina is also a rich treasury of the flora. The Radan mountain has many pastures and forests and even boasts a remaining rainforest, a legacy from the Ice Age. Our itinerary for travelling through the landscapes of Organic Serbia also features villages at the foot of Stara Planina, near Dimitrovgrad, where rare species of farm animals are still kept.



*Tourism Organisation of Dimitrovgrad
Municipality*

Phone: +381 10 360 873

www.todimitrovgrad.org.rs



Buša Herds Graze Again

A long time ago, the Balkan pastures were covered in herds of Buša – a relatively small breed of cattle, with short horns, black muzzle and a white ring of hairs, much like a doe. Buša (*Bos europaeusprimigenius*) is the breed also known as Serbian mountain bovine or Illyrian bovine. They have completely adapted to the high grazing grounds and harsh climate, are resistant to diseases and very fertile. One of the largest herds of today (as they are nearly extinct) is nowadays kept by one man – a cattle grower from the village of Gornji Krivodol. His herd is made up of more than two hundred heads of Buša, which he raises in line with the rules of organic farming. Each year on 7 July, celebrated as Ivanjdan, day of St John the Forerunner, when the herbs are at their most powerful according to the folklore, he takes his herd, in a symbolic move, to the succulent mountain pastures of Mučibaba to graze.

Balkan Biodiversity Fair

Dimitrovgrad is a town where every September a unique Biodiversity Fair is held, where old and forgotten breeds of swine, sheep, goats, horses and other farm animals are presented.



Flower That Resurrects

Near Suva Planina and to the west, in the gorge of the river Jelašnica, lives an unusual endemic plant – Ramonda serbica or more commonly known as the Serbian phoenix flower. Even when it is completely dried, this plant can still live again! Its “resurrection” quality was discovered by the Russian botanist, Pavel Chernyavsky. He dried a Ramonda and put it in his herbarium. He happened to spill some water on it, and the plant came to life and soon flowered yet again.

*Tourism Organisation of Pirot Municipality
Phone: +381 10 320 838, 320 839
www.topirot.com*

Sheep of Balkan Nomads

Karakačan sheep is the breed developed during several centuries of selection carried out by the nomad Karakačan tribes who took their herds to the Western Balkans pastures in the summers, and spent their winters in Greece. Until recently it was believed that this breed was not present any more in our region. Fortunately, this is not the case. Thanks to the devotion

and enthusiasm of several nature lovers, today in the village of Kamenica at the foot of Stara Planina, there is a large flock of these sheep with a black-brown fleece. Karakačanska sheep are known as resistant and hardy, and are characterised by an exceptionally gentle motherly instinct.



Goods of Nature and Fruit of Toplica Area

The south of Serbia is well known for its mineral and thermal waters, and a large area in this part of Serbia is called Toplica, its name alluding to warm waters. The main centre of this region, called Toplički after Toplica, is the town of Kuršumljija, well known for its fruit growing consisting mostly of plums, but apples and pears can also be found. One Dutch company, already mentioned here, gathered a large number of families from this area into an association of organic farmers. Here nature itself has been more than generous: in the vicinity of Kuršumljija only, there are as many as three

spas with curative waters: Prolom, Lukovska and Kuršumlijska, and there is also Radan, a stunning mountain. Close by is the mysterious Đavolja Varoš (Devil's Town) – an astonishing set of jagged rock structures which are well worth a visit. Science says that these unusual rock columns that are reminiscent of human figures were shaped by erosion, but people have always felt that they were spooky and have told many legends about them. One such tale says that there were two parties of wedding guests that were going to get the same bride, and that it was the Devil's power that turned them into

stone to remain there forever. Also worth visiting are the remnants of a large construction feat dating back from the 6th century – the archaeological site Caričin Grad (Empress' Town) or Justiniana Prima – the town that served to display all the knowledge of urban planners and architects of the epoch. Also close by and worth a visit is the archaeological site of Pločnik dating back to the times of the Vinča culture (5,500 BC) which also has an interesting reconstruction of the original settlement, whose inhabitants processed copper.



*Tourism Organisation of Kuršumljija
Municipality*

Phone: +381 27 380 963, 385 881

E-mail: tokursumljija@open.telekom.rs

Access – Program for Private Sector Development in Serbia

The ACCESS is a program implemented by the German Technical Cooperation (GIZ) on behalf of the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). It aims to further Serbia's economic development and facilitate the country's future membership in the European Union (EU) by supporting the implementation of the Serbian National Strategy for the Development of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises and Entrepreneurship, as well as the National Strategy for EU Accession.

The Program is realised by the GIZ in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management and the Ministry of Finance and Economy, as well as Serbian business organizations. Through ACCESS's assistance to Serbian support intermediaries, small and medium-sized companies of select sectors and regions are being empowered to make better use of their production, employment, and growth potentials, and to find new markets both in the region of South East Europe and the EU.

Specifically, ACCESS works with private sector market players, governments, universities, organic agri-business value chains, civil society, as well as farmer groups in the organic agricultural sector, in order to accomplish the following:

- support the development of sound policy environments that enable open markets, private sector investment, and gender-equitable access to factors of production, products, and income;
- promote effective institutions and services such as agricultural extension, to enable both female and male producers to acquire, protect, and use the assets they need to take advantage of emerging market and trade opportunities;
- strengthen producer and other rural organizations in order to help them participate effectively in markets, reduce transaction costs, acquire productivity enhancing technologies, and make use of pertinent information on domestic, regional, and international markets;
- support the development of product standards and quality control to meet EU market demands for food safety, purity and quality, and thereby reach higher-value markets;
- assist in appropriate marketing measures that will enable agricultural producers to reach national, regional and global markets;
- assist in the development of the public sector's role as monitor, regulator and referee, as well as the provider of market-facilitating goods and services;
- support in improving the quality of research and education in organic sector and attracting additional funding sources, mainly done by integrating Serbian research programmes into EU programmes, by facilitating the exchange of researchers with universities and institutes in the EU and by promoting membership in different international organic research associations.

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National Tourism Organisation of Serbia

Čika Ljubina 8, Belgrade

Tel: +381 11 6557 100

Fax: +381 11 2626 767

E-mail: office@serbia.travel

www.serbia.travel

www.facebook.com/serbia.travel

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Organisation of Serbia

GIZ/ACCESS

BELGRADE OFFICE

Makenzijeva 24/5

11000 Belgrade

Tel: +381 11 24 00 371

Fax: +381 11 24 00 370

Program Leader: Tobias Stolz

E-mail: tobias.stolz@giz.de

NOVI SAD OFFICE

Narodnog fronta 23d

21000 Novi Sad

Tel: +381 21 472 19 20

Fax: +381 21 472 19 21

Project Managers: Emilija Stefanović,

Marija Kalentić

E-mail: emilija.stefanovic@giz.de,

marija.kalentic@giz.de

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