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# Soulfood Serbia

*Sometimes a country will for days keep its secrets from a traveller, showing him nothing but its surfaces, its grass, its trees, the outside of its houses. Then suddenly it will throw him a key and tell him to go where he likes and see what he can.*

Thus wrote Rebecca West in her travelogue *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*. And one of the possible keys to the tourist destinations of Serbia, whether you come from afar or from the immediate neighbourhood, must be food. Food bridges the gap between the most basic human needs and the most sensual and cultural desires, elevating the simple act of preparing meals to an art. The brochure in your hands covers only part of the gastronomic wealth of Serbia selected on the basis of geographical identity and protected regional products.

Serbia's turbulent history has left its mark on the country's food, a cuisine which derives from the four corners of the world. However the bountiful climate and imaginative local population have ensured that both culinary originals and variations are at once magnificent and communicative. When guests are of-

fered a well prepared meal in Serbia, one often hears: "Try this! It speaks six languages and stutters in a seventh". And when you try it, you realise that the mention of "stuttering" is just a charming trick of culinary modesty, discreetly fishing for a compliment. The language of food, just like the language of flowers and other niceties of nonverbal communication, is easy on the ear and long in the memory.

Serbia's climate and topography vary widely from region to region. On the plains, the climate is continental while the mountains enjoy typical mountain weather with temperate climate variations in the river valleys, while the southwest approaches the Adriatic-Mediterranean climate. Topography and climate are reflected in biodiversity and agriculture and these in their turn have an impact on gastronomy: someone with a large appetite is described as eating like a blizzard, while one who eats modestly is said to eat like a bird. But the conventional wisdom among Serbs is that it is better to eat more because "strength goes in through the mouth," and "a passionate eater is a passionate worker".

But while the delicious tastes and smells of Serbia are undoubtedly fuel for passionate appetites, this country also has a long tradition of healthy eating. In generations past, Orthodox Serbs observed strict rules of fasting under which foods of animal origin were not eaten on Wednesdays or Fridays, nor during Lent or Advent. Of course they also abstained from sinful thoughts and deeds during these times. This meant that there were fasting days during the year than there were days on which meat and dairy products could be eaten, so it was important to develop recipes and methods of food preparation which we now recognise as healthy.

So if you're a vegetarian, you'll find Serbian food thoroughly enjoyable, but if you're not, there's nothing to fear. Even in the old days, Serbs were pragmatic enough not to insist on travellers fasting. What's more, Serbs are a hospitable nation, so from the elegant restaurants of the capital, through the lively inns and taverns in the rest of the country, to the most modest households in the poorest villages, your hosts will do all they can to make you feel welcome.



# Eastern and Southern Serbia

SOULFOOD  
*Serbia*



A loved one is dearer than a brother just as sugar is sweeter than honey, according to an old Serbian poem. However, unlike sugar, honey is both a food and medicine. On the idyllic meadows along the fairyland rivers Mlava and Krupajsko, local beekeepers produce Serbia's famous Homolje honey. Homolje is renowned for its mystical legends, Vlach magic and pagan eroticism, but the honey produced there is famous for its medicinal properties. Homolje honey is good for digestion and the immune system; it sharpens the eyes and strengthens the voice; it maintains the suppleness of the body, confers mental contentment, helps heal wounds, clear the complexion, adds a glow to the skin and last, but not least, is a great supplement for losing weight.



## ***Homolje Lemonade***

### ***Ingredients:***

200 ml water at room temperature  
1 teaspoon honey  
juice of a lemon

### ***Preparation:***

Every morning, using a wooden spoon (never metal), dissolve Homolje honey in a glass of water, add lemon juice and drink on an empty stomach.

*After drinking this lemonade for a month, the traveller will add better health and a brighter look to his memories of magical Homolje.*

### ***Tourist Event:***

## ***Homoljski Motivi (Homolje Themes)***

Kučevo, August

*The oldest review of original national arts in Serbia: music, dance, food, drink and ethno crafts which can be bought as souvenirs.*

+381 (0)12 850 666



Serbia is one of ten European countries through which the Danube flows. This mighty river was first mentioned by the ancient Greece historian Herodotus: the upper branch as the Danubius (the queen of all rivers) and the lower as the Istros (the bountiful river). It is true that the bounty of this magnificent watercourse, one of the most beautiful ways to arrive in Serbia, not only feeds the land with water and the eyes with splendid natural beauty, but has also brought a wealth of fish swimming into Serbian cuisine.

After visiting the archaeological sites at Vinča and the Visitors Centre at Lepenski Vir, the traveller will be ready to drop into the restaurants along the Danube to sample the local fish, especially the fish soup, which is known far and wide. There are as many recipes for this as there are villages along the river, some including secret ingredients known only to the local fisher folk. One very old secret was that the soup must be made with water from the Danube.



## *Fish Soup*

### *Ingredients:*

500 gm brown onion;  
a bunch of greens (carrot tops, parsley, parsnip, celery);  
1-2 kg various kinds of fish: carp, catfish (catfish head is especially good), barbell, pike and more (the more variety the better);  
fish roe, 1 large sweet pepper;  
200 ml tomato juice;  
200 ml white wine;  
a bunch of parsley leaves;  
a few cloves of garlic;  
bay leaf whole peppercorns;  
dried and ground red pepper (both sweet and hot);  
salt;  
and, finally, the secret ingredient!

### *Preparation:*

The soup is best made outdoors in a cauldron over a fire, but a large saucepan in the kitchen will do. Sweat the onion thoroughly in oil, add the finely chopped or grated greens and fry gently. Moisten with a little water and then add a tablespoon of ground red pepper (sweet or hot, according to your taste), and take care not to burn. When the water boils, add the fish and roe, then cold water, remembering that it will boil down by about a third, add salt, bay leaf and whole peppercorns, a fresh red pepper

pricked with a knife to release its scent, the whole unpeeled cloves of garlic and the tomato juice. Simmer over a low flame for two hours. During cooking, don't stir the soup because this will break up the fish. Instead shake the pot from time to time. Right at the end add the white wine and the finely chopped bunch of parsley.

### *And the secret?*

It's in the slight, almost unnoticeable thickening of the soup. The old masters achieved this by sewing some maize flour into a little cloth bag and cooking it in the soup (much like a teabag), but you can achieve the same effect by stirring a teaspoon of the finest corn flour into a little water and adding it at the end of the cooking, then bringing the soup back to the boil.



### Tourist Events:

*Along the Danube there are various traditional events for fans of fish and good times, with competitions for the preparation of fish soup and fish stews.*

#### ***Alaske večeri (Fishermen's Evenings)***

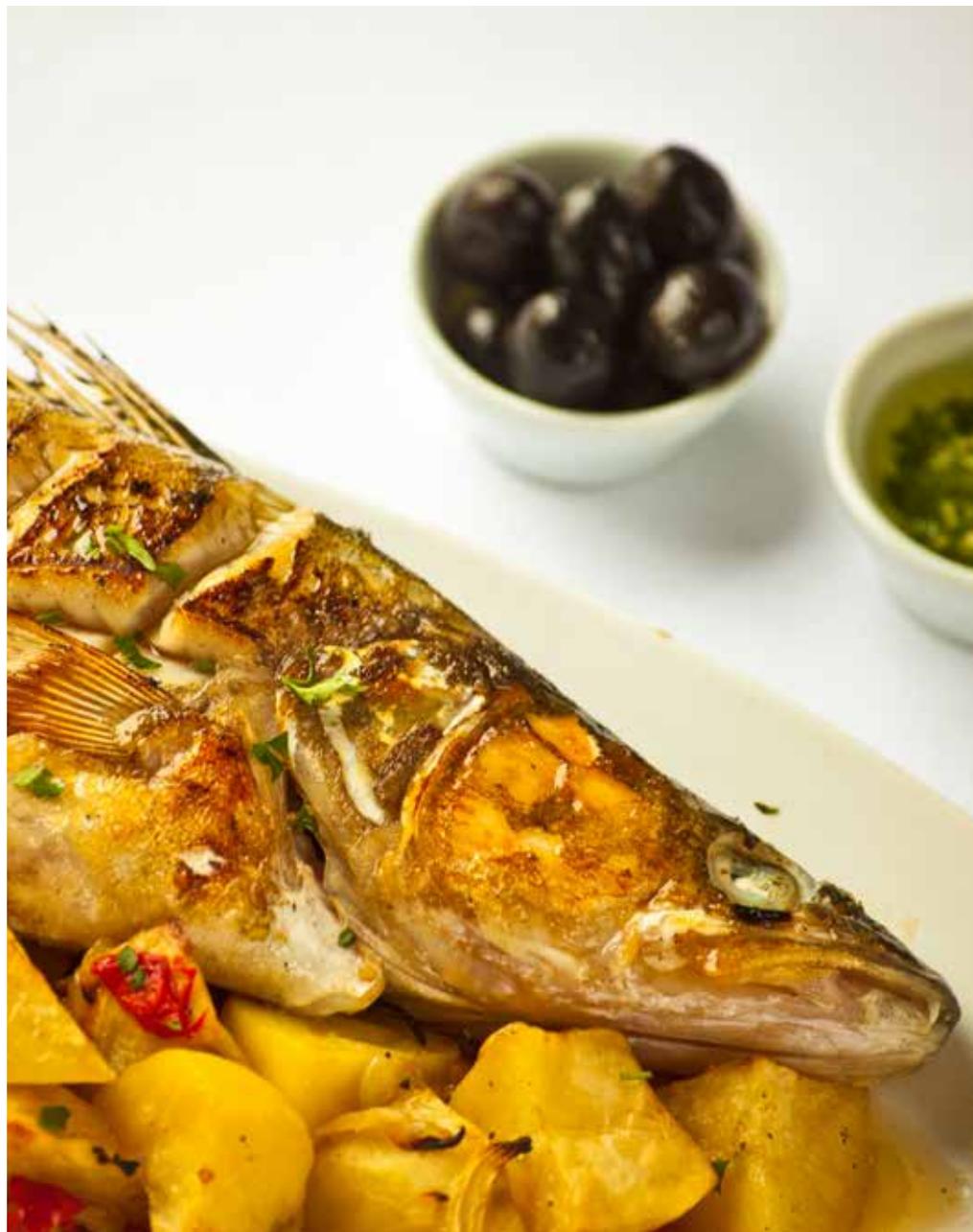
Veliko Gradište, August

+381 (0)12 663 179

#### ***Golubački kotlić (The Golubac Cauldron)***

Golubac, July

+381 (0)12 638 614





Wine is an essential ingredient for the soup, but it also goes very well with any fish dishes. Not that you need the food as an excuse. The best wines of Eastern Serbia are from the area around the triple border of Romania, Bulgaria and Serbia, near the town of Negotin. One unusual tourist attraction is the original wine cellars in the villages of the Negotin area. The wines here are made from rare old native varieties of grapes, such as Muscat, using a combination of traditional methods and modern technology. The personality of these wines never fails to impress.

*Tourist Event:*

***Sajam meda i vina  
(Honey and Wine Fair)***

Negotin, May

*Tasting and sales from the vineyards and apiaries, and the proclamation of the best wine of the year, souvenir sales and a great program of culture and entertainment.*

+381 (0)19 547 555





Stara Planina (once known as the Balkan Mountains), is part of the Carpathian-Balkan mountain range. Towns near Stara Planina are Negotin, Zaječar, Knjaževac, Pirot and Dimitrovgrad. Winter savory (*Satureja montana*) is native to Stara Planina and is valued in the area as a medicinal herb, being used to make a tea known as Rtanj čaj. The plant is a general tonic and is used for a large number of health issues. It is also believed to be an aphrodisiac.



No one should visit this area without touring the rivers, lakes and waterfalls. And if all that walking makes you hungry, just think of the porcini mushrooms, roast lamb and Pirot sheep milk cheese that awaits you. This cheese is one of the best of its kind in the world and one of the best-known products of the area. Other features here are hand-made Pirot rugs and the endless jokes about the locals. These mostly focus on their similarity to the Scots, being both sheep farmers and renowned for their frugality.

*Tourist Event:*

***Pirotska jagnjijada  
(Pirot Lamb Festival)***

Pirot, May

*Spit-roast lamb competition, but also the place to find excellent cheese and honey as well as the famed Pirot rugs and pottery.*

+381 (0)10 320 838



Near Pirot is the little town of Bela Palanka. Here, as well as finding natural beauty, historical monuments and excellent restaurants, the visitor can go hunting, fishing, paragliding and mountain climbing.

*Tourist Event:*

***Dani Banica (Pie Days)***

pie baking competition

Bela Palanka, August

*This event is a celebration of traditional cuisine as well as rarely-seen ancient crafts.*

+381 (0)18 853 080



Still in the south of Serbia, some distance from Pirot is Leskovac. A wealth of archaeological finds have earned it the title of Imperial town, along with the claim that Leskovac was the birthplace of Justinian I. Apart from the Roman ruins, Leskovac is notable for the Crkva Odžaklija, or Chimney Church, built in the nineteenth century while Serbia was under the Ottoman Empire. Having been forbidden by the Turks to build a church, the resourceful people of Leskovac built this very atypical church, half dug into the earth and camouflaged with a towering pseudo-chimney, a feature never seen on Orthodox churches.

Leskovac took its name long ago from its famed hazelnut woods, lešnik being the Serbian word for hazelnut. Today it is better known for its red peppers. The people of Leskovac speak a dialect of Serbian which preserves many features of the Old Church Slavonic language and even many Serbs find the local difficult to understand. However one word, ajvar, is known throughout the land and beyond as the name for a preparation of roast peppers, preserved in jars for use throughout the winter. Leskovac is also known for its fantastic barbecue meats: you'll probably arrive in the town by car or bus, but once there you must try the Leskovac Train

(leskovački voz), an assortment of grilled meats which arrive at the table one after another like wagons. Nor should you overlook leskovačka mučkalica, a spicy medley of peppers and grilled meats, much prized among gourmets for its spicy flavour.

*Tourist Event:*

### ***Roštiljijada (Barbecue Festival)***

Leskovac, September

*Concerts of various kinds of music and a competition for the biggest hamburger.*

+381 (0)16 233 361





## *Leskovačka Mučkalica*

### *Ingredients:*

1 kg pork neck (or mixed pork and veal);  
200 gm bacon;  
4-5 brown onions;  
10 red peppers, roasted, peeled and chopped;  
500 gm peeled and chopped tomatoes;  
2 heads garlic;  
salt;  
ground dried peppers;  
hot chilli powder if desired.

### *Preparation:*

Cut the meat into cubes and make kebabs, salt them and brush with oil then barbecue. While the meat is cooking, chop the bacon into small cubes and fry gently until the fat melts, then add the onion and fry gently in the bacon fat until it falls apart. Add the chopped red pepper. Remove the meat from the skewers, add to the pan and cook gently until the meat is tender and the sauce has come together. Add the tomato and cook a few minutes more. When finished, add the finely chopped garlic and ground peppers. Add hot chilli powder if desired. Serve with home-made bread or rolls.

Niš is the third largest city in Serbia. It lies on the crossroads of the major routes which connect Europe to Asia Minor and the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. It is famous for the archaeological site of Mediana, built in the third century BCE by Constantine the Great. Niš today is a modern urban centre known for jazz, film and literary festivals. But the pride of Niš is its cheese pie. In traditional Serbian house-keeping, there is a special place for pies, some

of which include apple, pumpkin, sour cherry, poppy seed, dock, spinach, meat and wheat groats. But the true Serbian pie is gibanica, layers of flaky crust filled with cheese, clotted cream and plenty of eggs. Apart from the filling, the quality of the pastry is very important for gibanica and at one time housewives would bake this pie only on a wood stove. These days the pastry is mostly bought ready made and the cook's art is reflected only in their choice.

Not far from Niš is Svrlijig - a town whose name is quite unknown to foreigners but which is very attractive as a tourist destination. Apart from excellent honey and the truffles which can be found in the Svrlijig woods, the town's claim to culinary fame is the dull-looking but magical Belmuž, a dish of fresh cheese and maize flour which, as well as being extraordinarily tasty and healthy, is claimed by the people of Svriljig to be an aphrodisiac.



**Tourist Event:**

**Belmužijada (Belmuž Festival)**

Svrljig, August

*Dedicated to belmuž with accompanying events such as a competition for the most beautiful shepherdess, home handicrafts, traditional Svrljig cooking, shepherd games and a cultural program.*

+381 (0)18 821 059

**Belmuž**

**Ingredients:**

600 gm very fresh young sheep cheese (from Svrljig if you can get it);  
150 gm white maize flour;  
salt.

**Preparation:**

Gently heat the cheese in a deep pot until it has melted but not boiled, then stir in the maize flour very gradually. Continue to cook while stirring continuously for 15-20 minutes. When the cheese comes together in a ball in the middle of the pot and the milk fat separates out to the side, the belmuž is finished. Add salt to taste and serve with a variety of salads as an entrée.



Geographically, Kosovo is the junction of Central and Southern Europe, the Adriatic and the Black Sea. Kosovo's climate is continental but dominated by mountainous regions. The turbulent history of this region continues to the present day, but the natural resources, archaeological and historical monuments and culinary achievements are all available to tourists. Kosovo's rivers are teeming with tasty treats: freshwater trout, eel, catfish, carp, chub, pike and freshwater crustaceans. The Lipovica and Klecka forests near Lipljan are excellent for hunting, and the Prokletija Mountains and Mount Brezovica have great ski slopes. The urban architecture of Kosovo is a unique mix of east and west, with a lot of mosques and churches, both old and new, local and foreign. There are beautiful Orthodox monasteries in

Dečani, Gračanica, Peć, Prizren and many other Kosovo destinations which offer tourists an insight into the deep history of the Serbian state all the way back to its origins.

The monasteries of Kosovo are known far and wide, as are the wines of Kosovo and Metohija. Kosovo is also known for its white grape brandy, lozovača. The best wines in the region are reds, including merlot, teran and burgundy. The best-known wines are from Orahovac near Prizren and from the area around Đakovica and Peć, cities famous for their vineyards and orchards. The wide range of charcuterie, cheeses and pastry-based foods is similar to that in other parts of Serbia. The deserts of this region are distinctive for their topping of caramelised sugar syrup with vanilla and lemon.



# Central Serbia

SOULFOOD  
*Serbia*



The largest part of central Serbia is Šumadija, whose name means the land of forests. The soil which gave birth to those forests is today supports orchards, and the fruit which is the symbol and trademark of Šumadija is the plum. Among the profusion of excellent varieties, the požegača stands out, having been brought to the Balkans from Syria by Alexander the Great in the fourth century BCE.

There are many ways to spend a holiday in central Serbia: skiing, hunting or even spending time in a village household; you can tour the beauties of nature, historical monuments or search out ethno-oddities. But whether you're heading for the famous Dragačevo brass festival in Guča, the Haymaking Festival in Rajac near Ljig, the estates and mausoleum of the royal Karađorđević family in Oplenac near Topola or any of Šumadija's other fascinating destinations, you can always expect tasty food and an unavoidable aperitif – šljivovica, Serbia's world-famous plum brandy. Just as whiskey or tequila come in endless varieties, each the secret and pride of the distillery in which they are produced, so there are many varieties of šljivovica in Serbia. What is common to them is the scent of plums, a golden colour and the

intoxicating power of a strong liquor. Less alcoholic, but no less tasty, is a drink prepared from šljivovica when the weather is cold. In Serbia they say that wine is warming and brandy cool-

ing so, of course, during winter when a slava (the feast day of a family's patron saint) is celebrated, the drink of choice is Šumadijski čaj (Šumadija tea), or mulled plum brandy.



## Šumadijski Čaj

### Ingredients:

500 gm sugar;  
350 ml šljivovica;  
150 ml water.

### Preparation:

In a deep metal pot, melt and caramelize the sugar until it becomes reddish in colour, then add the water and šljivovica together. Return to the boil (some do this two or three times) and serve immediately.



### Tourist Events:

*This region is known for its competitions for preparing and tasting šljivovica and other plum products with an accompanying culture and entertainment program.*

### Šumadijski dani šljive (Šumadija plum days)

Stragari village near Kragujevac, August  
+381 (0)62 287 211

### Šumadijska kraljica (Queen of Šumadija)

choice of the best brandy,  
Gornja Trepča Spa, August.  
+381 (0)69 622 105

### Sajam šljiva (Plum Fair)

Osečina, August  
+381 (0)14 452 311

Apart from making brandy, plums are used for many other excellent dishes, both sweet and savoury (carp with dried plums, plum dumplings, plum jam and others). As a tourist, you shouldn't pass up the opportunity to try combinations you won't find anywhere else: grilled prunes wrapped in thin slices of bacon, a delicate sweet and sour dish which may be served hot or cold. In some places, the stone of the prune will be replaced with cheese, in others with walnuts or olives.

Serbian meals are nothing if not hearty, so you'll always find plenty of bread, pasta or potatoes served with a meal, the starch serving as a counterpoint to the spiciness of the other food. Apart from bread, as an entrée or an accompaniment to the main course, there may be proja (cornbread), pogača (a yeast cake similar to bread) or steaming hot potatoes baked under a sač. The sač is a high bell-shaped metal cover for food onto which live coals are piled, so that the food cooks beneath.



#### *Tourist Events:*

### ***Dani azanjske pogače (Azanja Pogača Days)***

Azanja, August.

*Selection of the best traditional and modern pogača, with an accompanying program including an accordion competition and an exhibition of national crafts. The festival has also been associated with a successful attempt to bake the world's largest pogača, now listed in the Guinness Book of Records.*

+381 (0)26 317 249

### ***Projada (Proja Festival)***

Ratina village near Kraljevo, September

*A festival dedicated to maize flour cooking with an accompanying ethnological and folk dancing program.*

+381 (0)36 316 000

### ***Dani krompira u Rađevini (Potato days in Rađevina)***

Krupanj, October

*Science, exhibitions, competitions, cultural displays, entertainment and a sports program, all with a potato theme.*

+381 (0)15 584 094

No discussion of the rich cuisine of Central Serbia would be complete without mentioning cabbage dishes, particularly those with mutton, cooked in large earthenware pots over an open fire. Beans also occupy a special place, especially when cooked in large cauldrons suspended over a fire. Finally it's important to mention the wonderful goulashes, salads and

soups of various kinds of fungus. For the experts, these include parasol mushrooms (*Macrolepotia procera*), chanterelles (*Cantharellus cibarius*), saffron milk caps (*Lactarius deliciosus*), porcini (*Boletus edulis*), giant puffball (*Langermania gigantea*) and chicken of the woods (*Laetiporus sulphurus*).



*Tourist Events:*

***Kupusijada (Cabbage Festival)***

Mrčajevci village near Čačak, September  
*Competition for cooking wedding cabbage and other cabbage dishes along with an extensive cultural, artistic and sports program.*

+381 (0)32 343 721

***Pasuljijada Srebrni kazan (Silver Cauldron Bean Festival)***

Kraljevo, September  
*Traditional bean cooking competition in the central square of Kraljevo*

+381 (0)36 316 000





Forests, meadows and clearings in the mountainous area of Central Serbia provide the perfect environment for berry fruits. In the summer season, when there is no snow, the Kopaonik ski centre is overflowing with sweet, healthy blueberries, which visitors may pick themselves or buy.

**Tourist Event:**

***Dani borovnica (Blueberry Days)***

Mount Kopaonik, July

*Educational, competitive and recreational event related to picking, growing and processing both wild and cultivated blueberries.*

+381 (0)36 738 670





# Western Serbia

**SOULFOOD**  
*Serbia*



Western Serbia is a region of charming towns and idyllic mountain villages. Tourism focuses on the mountains – Zlatibor, Tara, Zlatar, Golija and the Pešter Plateau – but there are many other places of interest, such as the Uvac River Gorge, the teeming waters of the Drina, Priboj Spa, the Potpečka and Stopića caves, the open-air museums Staro Selo (Old Village) in Sirogojno and Drvengrad in Mokra Gora, the Šarganska Osmica narrow gauge railway, the Mileševa, Uvac and Rača monasteries and a number of timber churches. Shepherd Days, Kosjerić, Arilje raspberries, Užice prosciutto, Zlatar cheese, Užice fruit brandy, komplet lepinja (egg, clotted cream and prosciutto sandwich) and buckwheat pie are just some of the attractions of this region. At every step the visitor can enjoy beautiful and healthy nature, examples of remarkable cultural traditions and all kinds of activities, all accompanied by a wealth of culinary experiences.



Kajmak, a slightly aged, salted clotted cream is a traditional dairy product in the mountainous regions of Serbia. Creamy and slightly tart, it is served as an entrée, as a spread or as an addition to meals (rather like butter or sour cream). It is made by fermenting the milk fat obtained by scalding milk. The Serbian saying “Take the kajmak off”, apart from its primary culinary meaning, means taking for yourself the most valuable part of something. In that sense, the

kajmak of tourism in Serbia is the spectacular Mount Zlatibor, the closest towns to which are Čajetina, Užice and Nova Varoš or the village of Mokra Gora with the ethno-village of Drvengrad, built by film director Emir Kusturica. But there’s more to Zlatibor than the famous kajmak; you’ll also find a wide range of Zlatibor šljivovica, cheese, and smoked and dried meats.



#### *Tourist Events:*

#### ***Pršutijada (Charcuterie Fair)***

*Mačkat, January*

*Exhibition and sales of dry meat products: beef and pork prosciutto, bacon, sausages, smoked mutton and other smoked meats, all with the obligatory accompaniment of musicians and arts-and-culture associations.*

*+381 (0)31 841 646*

#### ***Šljivovički sajam domaće rakije (Šljivovica Fair of Home-Made Brandy)***

*Šljivovica village on Mount Zlatibor, April*  
*As well as a competition for the best brandy maker in the Zlatibor district, there are also toastmaster and pie making competitions.*

*+381 (0)31 841 646*



Mount Golija, near the towns of Raška, Ivanjica and Novi Pazar, is a biosphere and nature reserve under UNESCO protection. Among its many delights, Golija offers gastronomic treats in the form of mushroom tasting and, if you're feeling energetic, mushroom picking.

### *Mushroom Goulash*

#### *Ingredients:*

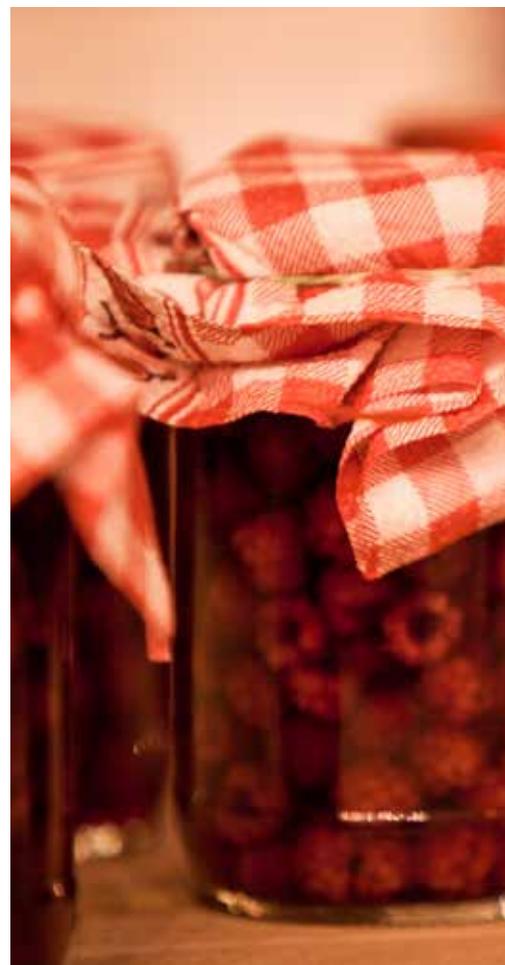
100 gm fresh chanterelles;  
100 gm fresh porcini;  
1 garlic clove (or half a spring garlic cut in two or three pieces);  
1 teaspoon butter;  
1 tablespoon olive oil;  
salt and pepper;  
200 ml sour cream;  
50 gm each of parmesan and feta;  
basil.

#### *Preparation:*

Fry the mushrooms for ten minutes in the butter and oil, then add the chopped garlic. Season with salt and pepper, then add the grated cheese and sour cream. Stir over heat until the cheese melts and at the very end add finely chopped basil, preferably fresh.



In the Zlatibor district, in the Morava and Rza-va river basins, lies the town of Arilje, known throughout the world for its raspberries. Serbia is the world's second-largest producer of raspberries, a fruit known as red gold because of its nutritional and culinary value. In Western Serbia this red gold is used for juices, syrups, creams, ice creams, cakes and tarts.





### *Old-Fashioned Raspberry Cake*

#### *Ingredients for cake:*

6 egg yolks;  
250 gm flour;  
50 gm sugar;  
200 gm butter;  
1 tsp baking powder.

#### *Ingredients for topping:*

6 egg whites;  
300 gm sugar;  
600 gm strawberries;  
100 gm crushed walnuts;  
1 tsp vanilla sugar.

#### *Preparation:*

Beat the egg yolks with 50 gm sugar, add the butter and flour mixed with baking powder, bring the dough together and then spread it evenly in a baking tin.

Bake in a preheated oven at 180° C. While it is baking beat the egg whites until stiff with 300 gm of sugar and vanilla sugar. When the cake is browned, remove from the oven and strew it with the chopped walnuts; arrange the raspberries on top and cover it with the meringue mixture. Turn the oven down to 100° C and return the cake until a crust forms on the meringue.

Four kilometres from Nova Varoš rises Mount Zlatar, which boasts skiing and paragliding among its attractions for tourists. The Uvac River Gorge lies between the northern slope of the Zlatar and the southern spur of the Zlatibor massif. This region is unique as the home of the Griffon Vulture. The area around the Uvac River Gorge has been proclaimed a special nature reserve in an attempt to protect this species. Among the rare birds with colonies here are grey eagles, wallcreepers, eagle owls and kingfishers. Mammals from the European Red List represented here include species of bats and otters.

Foodwise, this area is known for Zlatar cheese, the recipe for which is not a secret although, in fact, no one else can make it. Only here and nowhere else in the world are there such pastures and such water, which are why the milk here produces cheese of such a special quality and aroma. An additional trick is that the cows are milked by hand, maintaining hygiene without chemicals and the use of wooden vessels. Sjenica cheese is used to make a number of exquisite local dishes. The gibanica here is the same as in other parts of Serbia, yet different, because the pastry is made from buckwheat flour. One excellent specialty of this area is this pie made from Zlatar cheese and buckwheat flour.



#### *Tourist Events:*

### ***Zlatarska Sirijada (Zlatar Cheese Festival) Izložba Meda (Honey Show) and Darovi Zlatara (Zlatar's Bounty)***

Nova Varoš, July-August

*Competitive event for the choice of the best cheese; competition for the best pie made from buckwheat pastry; prizes for the household with the most cows and the youngest spouses as well as a competition for izvici a traditional kind of singing without instrumental accompaniment.*

+381 (0)33 261 2621

### ***Dani Sjeničke Pite (Sjenica Pie Days)***

Sjenica, June

*Selection of the best sweet or savoury pie and exhibition of rugs, ethnic crafts, paintings, charcuterie and dairy products.*

+381 (0)20 744 843

Sjenica sudžuk is a local sausage made to resemble the meander of the River Uvac. It is prepared from beef and beef suet in a proportion of four to one. Sudžuk is cold smoked and then dried. From the slope of Mount Pešter and the Pešter Plateau, where the towns of Sjenica and Novi Pazar lie, comes Sjenica cheese with its exceptional taste and aroma. The area also produces exceptional peppers and cream.





# Vojvodina

SOULFOOD  
*Serbia*



Vojvodina in the north of Serbia is a flat region of isolated farms, wealthy villages and towns with Middle European architecture and culinary traditions. One of the main agricultural products recalled by history from the sixteenth century is the healthy and tasty Futog cabbage, named after the town on the outskirts of Novi Sad. Cabbage is used in Vojvodina both as a meal in itself and as an accompaniment, as a filling for savoury pies or pancakes, and as a soup. Pickled cabbage is well known as a salad, but is also a basic ingredient of sarma and the even better known podvarak. Sarma are packages of spiced minced meat and rice wrapped in a leaf of pickled cabbage, while podvarak is braised, finely chopped pickled cabbage, usually served with pork knuckle or turkey, goose, duck or, not uncommonly, with fish.



## **Podvarak**

### *Ingredients:*

a whole pickled cabbage, cut into fine strips;  
oil;  
a large brown onion;  
a handful of rice;  
whole peppercorns;  
bay leaf;  
ground dried peppers;  
parsley;  
salt.

### *Preparation:*

Finely chop the onion and fry it in oil, adding a little water, until transparent. Add the cabbage, bay leaf and whole peppercorns and braise for an hour, occasionally adding a little mixed water and brine from the cabbage. Add a handful of rice and more liquid and simmer until the rice is cooked. Add the ground red peppers and finely chopped parsley and serve hot.

### *Tourist Event:*

## **Futoška Kupusijada (Futog Cabbage Festival) Futog, October**

*Competition for preparing cabbage dishes, competition for growing the largest cabbage and an arts-and-culture program.*

+381 (0)21 6617 343

+381 (0)64 1629 639



As well as the Danube and Sava on its borders, Vojvodina is ornamented by a number of peaceful, meandering rivers as well as a wealth of both natural and artificial lakes. Because of this, freshwater fish dishes dominate the menu of the region.



**Tourist Events:**

*Vojvodina has many events and competitions involving the preparation of traditional fish dishes, accompanied by cultural and entertainment programs.*

***Apatinske ribarske večeri***  
***(Apatin Fishing Evenings)***

Apatin, July

+381 (0)25 772 555

***Somborski kotlić***  
***(The Sombor Cauldron)***

Sombor, July

+381 (0)25 434 350

***Zlatni kotlić Pančeva***  
***(The Pančevo Golden Cauldron)***

Pančevo, August

+381 (0)13 333 399



A group of five people, four women and one man, are standing in front of a traditional wooden house with a stone roof and a yellow wall. They are wearing traditional Vojvodina folk costumes. The man is wearing a black cap and a black coat. The women are wearing colorful, patterned dresses and aprons. The house has a stone roof and a yellow wall. The ground is covered with fallen leaves.

Because Vojvodina is mostly flat, a standard joke here is that when you stand on a pumpkin you can see Vienna. No doubt this line-of-sight communication explains why Vojvodina cakes, tarts, pies and strudels are from the Viennese school, which is to say excellent. The eclectic cuisine illustrates the wealth of difference in Vojvodina, with the manifold influences of all its peoples and nationalities or ethnic groups, of which there are more than 25.

*Tourist Events:*

***Dani Ludaje (Pumpkin Days)***

Kikinda, October

*Competition for the heaviest pumpkin and the longest marrow and a program including fun and games with pumpkins, an autumn carnival and a Banat breakfast.*

+381 (0)230 426 300

***Štrudlijada (Strudel Festival)***

Dolovo, September

*As well as displays and sales, this event has a competitive section in which members of the Association of Rural Women from all over Serbia and the region take part.*

+381 (0)13 351 366



Fruška Gora and Mount Vršac are the only two high points which interrupt the otherwise endless plain of Vojvodina. The slopes of these mountains and their rolling surrounds are ideal for vineyards and orchards. Wines, made from ancient and venerable species of grapes, and fruit brandies are found everywhere in Vojvodina, but the aromatic red desert wine bermet, a close relative of port, Madeira and sherry, can be found only in Sremski Karlovci. Through the Austro-Hungarian court, this wine became a favourite in European high society and beyond – legend has it that a supply of bermet went down with the Titanic.



**Tourist Events:**

*There are a large number of events in Vojvodina devoted to wine and fruit brandy, with tastings and various sorts of cultural and entertainment programs.*

**Vinofest (Wine Festival)**

Vršac, March  
+381 (0)13 832 999

**Međunarodni festival vina  
Interfest (Interfest International  
Wine Festival)**

Novi Sad, May  
+38165 505 5053,  
+38165 28 62 427

**Koviljska rakijada Parastos dudu  
(Mulberry Requiem Festival of  
Fruit Brandy)**

Kovilj, June  
+381 (0)21 6617.343

**Festival hrane, pića i zanatskih  
proizvoda Bodrofest (Bodro-  
fest Festival of Food, Drink and  
Craft Products)**

Bački Monoštor, August  
+381 (0)25 807504

**Dani berbe grožđa  
(Grape Picking Days)**

Vršac, September  
+381 (0)13 832 999

**Berbanski dani (Picking Days)**

Palić, September  
+381 (0)24 670 350

**Pudarski dani  
(Vineyard Guard Days)**

Irig, September  
+381 (0)22 465 466



Among the various excellent charcuterie products of Vojvodina, sremski kulen (pork salami from Srem) is notable. This large, fat sausage of minced pork and bacon seasoned with hot

peppers and salt is aged well to develop the flavour. Kulen is excellent as an entrée, in sandwiches or as an aromatic addition to pasta and other dishes.



#### *Tourist Events:*

*During February and May there are a number of festivals and other events in Vojvodina connected with making, tasting and selling traditional meat products along with various kinds of cultural and entertainment programs.*

#### ***Sremska kobasicijada (Srem Sausage Festival)***

Šid, February

+381 22 710 088

#### ***Slaninijada (Bacon Festival)***

Kačarevo, February

+381 64 1733 188

#### ***Kobasicijada (Sausage Festival)***

Turija, February

+381 21 737 597, +381 63 77 19 088

#### ***Festival kulena (Kulen Festival)***

Bački Petrovac, May

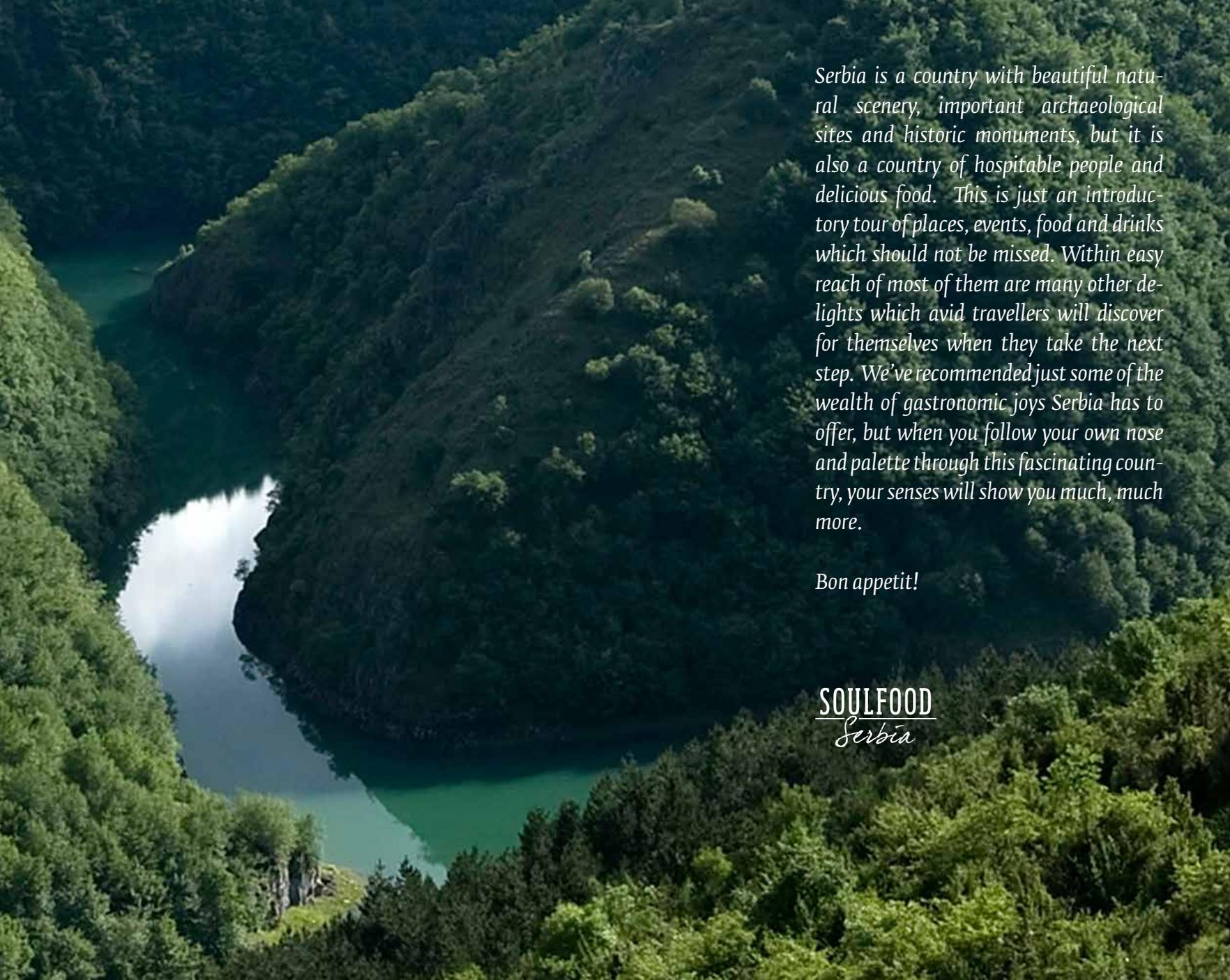
+381 (0)21 780 478

#### ***Sremska kulenijada (Srem Kulen Festival)***

Erdevik, May

+381 22 710 088





*Serbia is a country with beautiful natural scenery, important archaeological sites and historic monuments, but it is also a country of hospitable people and delicious food. This is just an introductory tour of places, events, food and drinks which should not be missed. Within easy reach of most of them are many other delights which avid travellers will discover for themselves when they take the next step. We've recommended just some of the wealth of gastronomic joys Serbia has to offer, but when you follow your own nose and palette through this fascinating country, your senses will show you much, much more.*

*Bon appetit!*

**SOULFOOD**  
*Serbia*

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