

# The Crown of Montenegro

Over the miraculous monastery towards the bewitching devil on Sinjajevina. Surfing on Durmitor's waves, on the highest paved road in Montenegro. Up to the crevice which brings us back to reality and puts us in our true place. The descent into the dark blue lake, crossing the two-hundred-metre-high arch. Crossing to the other side of the crevice, just out of sheer spite. In the end: meeting the river that would become famous.

LENGTH: 518 km

Podgorica - Danilovgrad - mon. Ostrog - Nikšić - Šavnik - Žabljak - Trsa - Plužine - Šćepan Polje - Trsa - Plužine - Šavnik - Boan - Podgorica

**Start:** From Hotel Keto towards the centre of Podgorica and follow the signs towards Nikšić in order to get onto the E762 highway. At the beginning of the 22<sup>nd</sup> kilometre, you will turn right towards the centre of Danilovgrad. The wide new road will quickly take you to the lower, larger part of the monastery (Holy Trinity Church, from 1824 and monastic quarters) as well as a crossroads with a sharp turn to the right, towards the upper monastery. That part of the road is very steep (10%), and it is also very narrow, with busy traffic, so L- and M-type campervans should definitely park here (the best and the most appropriate thing to do would be to leave every vehicle here and continue on foot).

Return: Continue by driving down the hill from the crossroads near the Lower Monastery. The road is also narrow here and unfenced, so you will have to be skilled to pass vehicles coming in the opposite direction. It is said that the road is protected by the saint and that no accidents can happen, but those who are less religious and a bit faint-hearted should better go back to Danilovgrad and continue down the main road towards Nikšić.

## The Nevidio Canyon

The ascent up the old road from Nikšić towards Šavnik (R5) is a very special experience. The road is narrow and winding, and leads through the picturesque landscapes of Lukovo, Ivanje and Krnovo after which the magnificent Durmitor massif emerges.



Your next goal is the entrance into the Nevidio Canyon. Campervans should be parked by the restaurant "Jatak" and the "Nevidio" ethno-village while motorcyclists and car drivers can continue down the small road one more kilometre towards the canyon entrance.

The Nevidio Canyon is 3 km long, it is very deep and so narrow in some places that you could jump across it. It is said that it is the last conquered canyon in the whole of Europe (the first passage through it took place back in the 1960s). This incredible place is worth every moment and every effort that you put into passing through it. In order to pass through it, you will need a professional guide and equipment (wetsuit). You can get all necessary information in the ethno-village, and in addition to that, you can climb up to the bridge at the beginning of the canyon and enjoy the view.

## Lakes and Žabljak

Along the old road towards Žabljak you will pass the village of Mljetičak (134 km) where you can breathe in the fresh Durmitor air. What awaits for you is the plateau of Sinjajevine: *Vražje jezero* (Devil's Lake) – a little turquoise jewel. Its twin brother, Riblje jezero (Fish Lake) is less than a kilometre away. An ancient cemetery (they call it "the Greek cemetery") is located on the left-hand side of the road, and it has very interesting tombstones. Behind this, there is a beguiling landscape called Bare Žugjica. This is truly one of the most beautiful Montenegrin landscapes.

Down the slopes of the Mt. Kučajevica you will quickly descend to Njegovude. This is a location (161 km) where everybody (except maybe for drivers of L-type campervans) will take a detour towards Zminičko jezero (Zminičko Lake). The lake is a lonely, mysterious gem that glimmers among the reeds and green water lilies. You could stay in Žabljak for days.

## Štuoc, the canyons of the Rivers Tara and Sušica

No detour to the village of Mala Crna Gora and the Sušica Canyon is recommended for camping vehicles, because the roads are narrow, with steep slopes.

From Žabljak, the road takes you west, through an area called Pitomine – here, the bewitching beauty of meadows is very noticeable, especially because of the rough contours of Međed (Bear Mountain), a peak that towers above Black Lake.

Four kilometres from the centre of Žabljak, there is a turning point (to the right) towards the lookout of Čurevac, a place from where the Tara Canyon can be seen. You will continue your journey left and start climbing through thick conifer forest towards the restaurant "Momčilov grad" and the peak of Štuoc. The asphalt is narrow but the views are wide and magnificent.



The ridge beneath Štuoc is the highest paved road in Montenegro (1,952 metres above sea level). There are a couple of points slightly ahead of the ridge which have the best view over the Tara Canyon. Before you enter the conifer forest, there is an open view over the mountains in the western part of Durmitor: first you will see the wavy, wrinkled beauty of Mt. Piva, and then the remote, magnificent, sharp silhouettes of Bioč, Maglič and Volujak, near the Bosnian border.

After travelling across the wavy plateau, where the road bobbles about like a rollercoaster in an amusement park, you will reach the crossroads that leads towards Mala Crna Gora. Motorcyclists will especially enjoy this part of the road.

You will not enter the village, but instead you will turn left and continue towards the Sušica Canyon. As the paved road is only 2.5 m wide starting from this point, the intersection is the farthest point for campers. The furthest point for others is 2 km down the road, at a place where the asphalt continues straight ahead for just over a kilometre, to the nearby summer pastures of Ograde kolibe. You can go right and continue on foot to a nearby place, surrounded by pines, with a view over the magnificent, wild Sušica Canyon. (Caution: cliff edge!)

## For the Brave



There is more to be seen from this place: on the opposite wall of the canyon, there is a narrow gravel road, going towards the edge. This is a road towards the village of Nedajno, a wonderful opportunity for those with more robust vehicles. Those who venture to the other side will be rewarded – fantastic canyon scenery will bring the best possible ending to the adventure.



## Žabljak

Once again: this is a place where you should stay for a couple of days, visit Black Lake, or at least Zminje jezero (Snake Lake), or take the ski lift to climb the peak Savin kuk...

## Surreal Landscapes

We shall start from Žabljak and head for the second southern part of the circle around the crown of Durmitor.

Here, everything looks like the rocky parts of the Andes and Martian landscapes.

You will pass under the impressive dome of the peak Stožina that stands above all the others and represents the trademark of Pošćenje Valley, whose rocky chaos will open in front of you.

The road is cut into the steep sides of Lomni Do and Uvita Geda, and you will feel like a fly on the wall – one of the best perspectives in Montenegro.

The ridge Sedlo is located at a height of 1,895 m and represents a border between two worlds – on one side the road goes down (8%) towards the grand cirque of Dobri Do. There is a resting place, from which there is a path towards Lake Škrka and Bobotov Kuk, the highest peak of Durmitor (2,523 m).

You still have a lot of ground to cover, passing through magical, almost surreal landscapes. You will go through places from which you can see vertically inverted layers of rocks on Prutaš and Šareni Pasovi, which are divided by stripes of grass. After this, you will arrive at the intersection in Pišče.

## Piva Lake



The road towards Plužine will take you from great heights towards the dreamlike Lake Piva. Just before exiting onto road E762 you will go past the "tunnel" intersection: that strange place in a short tunnel with the walls of stone, having two exits: left towards the village of Duži and right towards the road along the lake.

What follows is the most attractive part of the Piva Canyon.

The road will take you across the dam of Mratinje Hydroelectric Power Plant, and it is hard not to stop and take a look from the fence on the "dry" side with a gaping chasm which is 220 metres deep with a silk ribbon that is the River Piva. A few kilometres after the dam, you will cross to the other side of the canyon, across a narrow bridge that is a tasty treat for those who want to capture the unforgettable moments.

## Piva Monastery

Less than 8 km from Plužine, the road branches and if you turn right you will come to Piva Monastery (16th century) which is 400 m away. It is the largest Orthodox monastery that was built in this region during the Ottoman occupation. It is radiant because of the way in which it coalesces into the framework of the surrounding landscape – bitter, worried.

## New Beauties

Šćepan Polje, the border crossing with Bosnia, is an important place: where the Rivers Piva and Tara are forever joined together. Following a narrow road through the field of Crkvičko polje we climb back to the loop of Durmitor and the areas of new beauty. Before we make a necessary short break in the village of Trsa, you will first turn left – to get back to the Sušica Canyon and reach the village of Nedajno.

From the viewpoint above the village you can see the remote hub of the Sušica and Tara Canyons, as well as fantastic, immense walls that disappear into the abyss of Sušica – and the rock face on the Mala Crna Gora side with a profound chasm between you and it.

From Trsa, there is an 11-km-long descent towards the "tunnel" intersection and the road along the lakeside.

## Romance

The downhill towards a little place Boan leads will lead you down the rim of the Bukovica Canyon and offers a couple of beautiful viewpoints. After Boan, you will pass through the small canyon of the River Tušnje and climb to the small mountain of Semolj. A romantic ride through the beautiful forest.

From the ridge (1,570 m), you will drop down into a narrow, deep and long valley where the young and coy River Morača slowly grows. Of course, this is not a place deprived of beautiful views, all the way to Mioska – the intersection that takes you onto road E65/E80. The section of the road towards Podgorica is simple (and disproportionately attractive).





**Cultural Resources:**

1. Piva Monastery
2. Church under Soko
3. Podmalinsko Monastery
4. King Nikola's Court Complex
5. Morača Monastery
6. Ostrog Monastery
7. Duklja - Doclea
8. Kruševac Court Complex

**Natural Resources:**

1. Biogradska Gora National Park
2. Prokletije National Park
3. Durmitor National Park
4. Lovćen National Park
5. Lake Skadar National Park
6. Tara Canyon
7. Komarnica (Nevidio) Canyon
8. Piva Canyon
9. Morača Canyon
10. Trebjesa Hill

● Just one part of the natural and cultural heritage of Montenegro along the panoramic roads.

**Panoramic Roads around Montenegro**  
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**Food, Drinks and Souvenirs**

Montenegro is rich with sources of fresh, healthy water. To the taste of spring water add the superior taste of the local cuisine. On the roads you will notice signs for paths of wine, cheese and honey, but besides these also do not miss the opportunity to buy food from the hosts. Also try their brandy, mead and of course – great wines. Authentic souvenirs made from wool and wood will be not only memories, but also very useful items.



In all towns in Montenegro there are local tourist organisation info centres where you can get additional information and explanations.

**Types of vehicles**

Montenegrin attractive roads are often very narrow, winding and with significant slopes. In order to specify the road conditions for different vehicles, we have defined the following categories:

**1. Motorcycles (m)**

**2. Cars (c)**

**3. Small camping vehicles (S)**

Length up to 5.60 m  
Width up to 2.30 m  
Height up to 2.70 m

**4. Medium-sized camping vehicles (M)**

Length up to 7.00 m  
Width up to 2.30 m  
Height up to 3.50 m

**5. Large camping vehicles (L)**

Length 7.00 m and more  
Width 2.30 m and more  
Height 3.50 m and more

**Note:**

At this point the routes are not recommended for large camping vehicles (L) and drivers with no experience.

Different seasons entail a variety of challenges.

For more information and important information related to driving and routes, visit the site:

[www.panoramic.roads.montenegro.travel](http://www.panoramic.roads.montenegro.travel)

**Ostrog Monastery**

The two small churches of Ostrog Upper Monastery stand as petrified verses that have been built into the cliff caverns of Ostroška greda, rising sky-high above the Zeta Valley. The monastery was founded by St. Basil of Ostrog in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and remains the most revered pilgrimage site in Montenegro and one of the most visited monasteries in the entire Balkans. People who come here hope for a miraculous cure, so there are numerous believers from all over the world, Christians and Muslims – so expect crowds on the large terrace with amazing views. The two churches are decorated with frescoes. In the one dedicated to the Presentation of the Mother of God, which also holds the relics of St. Basil, frescoes have been painted on the stone walls.

