

Adriatic Adventure 2019

Day 6: Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina) to Budva (Montenegro) – 401 km

The two cities that have book ended our day appear to be, on the surface at least, very different beasts. From the urban sprawl of built up Sarajevo, to the ancient coastal town of Budva, one of the oldest settlements on the Adriatic at some 2500 years of age. One could be forgiven for thinking they were arriving into Monaco, or some other Mediterranean idyll, as you drop down the cliff side roads and into the hustle and bustle of the town. The sun provided a beacon for our travellers as they approached the city, but, apart from a brief spell as we awoke, our solar systems celestial body has been somewhat absent today.

Yes, it rained. Not just a little bit either, the roofs went up on the cabriolets and the waterproofs were donned and the pot-holed roads that led us out of Sarajevo and south to the border with Montenegro filled up with water as the roads became treacherous. I suppose it had to happen at some point, but despite the discomfort that precipitation brings to a travelling party, some of the dramatic skies it provided us with as we travelled both under and above the cloud, were a joy to behold.

Unfortunately, any competitive element to the day was severely dented, thanks to the border controls that needed to be tackled as we crossed between nations. Just like the extremely rickety bridge that joins the two realms and crosses the river Tapa, the customs processes were unsteady and the progress slow. Whilst half of the rally did get through in reasonable time, the other half and many of the marshals needed to ensure that the regularity sections can go ahead, fell foul of the narrow border.

When the crews did make it to the other side though they were surely treated to one of the highlights of the trip, the road that skirts along the edge of the Piv Canyon. From one side to the other, through cut-outs in the rock and all the while giving stunning views across the Piva and Piva Lake, the azure coloured water shining through the gloom of the day like piercing blue eyes. It was breath-taking stuff and made all the more dramatic by the moody ceiling that hung menacingly just above our heads.

There were other wonderful views and roads as Budva approached as well, and those that chose to follow the route despite the cancelled competition would have been rewarded by the exquisite vistas of the Skadar Lake National Park. It looked more akin to the wonderment of the Vietnamese countryside, as opposed to somewhere in the west, particularly as the narrow boats that patrol these waters chugged along as the evening light began to creep in.

Of course losing an afternoons competitive rallying always takes the sting out of the day somewhat and coupled with the fact that my weary companions are now on day six of this exploration of the Adriatic, many will likely be looking forward to a later start tomorrow and the chance of a lie in and relaxed morning. Rest assured though, the continuing competition will not be far from our thoughts, as the day will take us to the ancient city of Dubrovnik and back into Croatia.

Until tomorrow evening,

Syd.