

## Kotor, Montenegro

### Location and site

The Natural and Culturo-Historical Region of Kotor is located in the Boka Kotorska Bay, on the Adriatic coast of Montenegro.

### Urban morphology

At the heart of its mountainous landscape, the small city of Kotor, with its narrow, sinuous streets, maintains traces of the Middle Ages despite the disastrous earthquakes it suffered since that time.

In addition to the wall and gates that constituted the first monument of the settlement, a large number of Roman-Byzantine, Gothic and Renaissance constructions (the cathedral, churches, the palace) testify to the medieval past that has traces of both Rome and Byzantium, as well as of the Balkans and Western Europe.

### Registration criteria

Together with its surroundings due to its unique mixture of different cultural influences it has been entered in UNESCO's list of world's heritage. As a natural phenomenon, the Boka Kotorska Bay was formed as a fjord of exceptional beauty, for which in 2000. it was included in the Club of the Most Beautiful Bays in the World.

Kotor is among few of Mediterranean towns which has preserved its fortification system up to today. The walls surrounding the Old town of Kotor were one of the main motives and reasons why the UNESCO put Kotor on the list of the world natural and cultural heritage in 1979.

**Criterion (i):** It is the gathering on the gulf coast of the monuments of the cities, their harmony with the landscape, and their insertion in town planning of great value that contributes to the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

**Criterion (ii):** As the main bridge-heads of Venice on the South coast of the Adriatic, the aristocratic cities of captains and ship-owners of Kotor and its neighbours were the heart of the region's creative movement for many centuries. Its art, goldsmith and architecture schools had a profound and durable influence on the arts of the Adriatic coast.

**Criterion (iii):** The successful harmonization of these cities with the Gulf, their quantity, quality and diversity of the monuments and cultural properties, and especially the exceptional authenticity of their conservation, mean that the property can effectively be considered as unique.

**Criterion (iv):** Kotor and Perast are highly characteristic and authentically preserved small cities enhanced by architecture of great quality. Their town-planning is well adapted to and integrated in the landscape.

The transnational, serial nomination of Venetian fortifications from the 16th to the 17th century, which were candidates for enrollment in three countries: Italy, Croatia and Montenegro, was accepted at the 41st session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, held in Krakow from

02-12. July in 2017. Within the serial nomination of 15 nominated components of the Venetian defense system, six were entered: the fortified cities of Bergamo, Peschiera del Garda and Palmanova from Italy, the defense system of Zadar and the fortress of St. Nikola in Šibenik, from Croatia, and the Kotor Fortress from Montenegro which made Kotor a city with inscription on UNESCO list per two basis.

Inscribed in 2021 (16.COM) on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, Boka Navy is a traditional, non-governmental maritime organization founded in Kotor, Montenegro in 809. Its origin is linked to the arrival of the relics of St. Tryphon, the patron saint of the city of Kotor. Comprised of a community of seafarers with military, economic, educational and humanitarian functions, Boka Navy has played a memorial role for two centuries, preserving and promoting maritime history and tradition. Membership is voluntary and open to men, women and children of all ages. The organization is founded on the respect of human rights and of religious, national and cultural diversity.

### Historical reference

Kotor has a rich cultural and historic heritage, and it is one of the best-preserved medieval towns in this part of the Mediterranean. The rich history of Kotor comes from the cultural heritage of the city, marked by the different eras and leaders of the previous centuries. Kotor was founded by the ancient Romans as Acrvium. In the 10th century, it was an autonomous city ruled from Byzantium, and from 1186 to 1371 it was a free city of medieval Serbia.

It was Venetian and Hungarian for brief periods, an independent republic from 1395 to 1420, and Venetian again until 1797. The town suffered periodic damage from Turkish assaults and earthquakes. Between 1807 and 1814 it was occupied by France. The French period was followed by Austrian domination until 1918 when Slav sailors in the Austro-Hungarian navy mutinied at Kotor and the town was incorporated into the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (from 1929 to 2003 Yugoslavia). Today, Kotor is a part of Montenegro, which became independent in 2006.

### Culture

Kotor is a town located in the southeast corner of the Bay of Kotor, at the place where the sea went deepest into the mainland. This medieval center with a unique fortification system is a mix of streets and squares that mark noble palaces and houses dating from the Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance and younger architectural trends. Among the Kotor poets, the Renaissance poet Ljudevit Paskvalić (1500 – 1551) stands out, who belonged to the narrow circle of our most important poets. Kotor has a long tradition of theater, which, according to some estimates, dates back to ancient times. We have clear testimonies about the development of drama literature in Kotor. The municipal authorities asked the French administration to establish a theater in Kotor, which was approved in 1808. In 1810, the French occupation authorities adapted the building of the old town hall on the Square of Arms for this purpose and organized the work of the permanent theater, which is the oldest theater institution in Montenegro and one of the oldest in the region. A draft of this theater known as the Napoleon's Theater is kept in the Kotor Historical Archive. Musical and theatrical performances were performed in this theater until the 1980s, when it had to be closed due to the dilapidation of the building. The first puppet show in this theater was performed in 1929. After the Second World War, cultural life in Kotor flourished. By the decision

of the District People's Committee in Kotor, on February 12, 1949, the National Theater was established, which worked for the next ten years. It was one of the five professional theaters in Montenegro and had an average of eight premieres a year. Little is known about the fact that at that time Montenegro had the most theaters in Europe in relation to its population, whereas eight Kotor premieres a year are hard to reach by the entire country nowadays.

Today, ceremonial processions, traditional music festivals and events combined with modern manifestations are something that makes our city recognizable in the world and the region. The city of Kotor is mainly recognized for its art festivals, among which a special place is occupied by Kotor Art. It consists of the Kotor Children's Theater Festival, Don Branko's Music Days and the International Klapa Festival.

### Tourism

Popular Lonely Planet's Best in Travel yearbook for 2016 has named Kotor as the number one city to visit in the world. At that time Kotor was also among 10 European best destinations, together with Zadar, Paris, Nantes, Brussels, Athens and others...

The most famous portal dedicated to cruising tourism the "Cruise critics" enlisted Kotor among TOP FIVE cruising destinations at the Mediterranean. Kotor received PRO PR Vision City in 2016 award for good communication with the public and media and for representing Montenegro in the best way. In 2020, Daily Mail placed Kotor among world's most beautiful ports while in February 2021, Kotor earned its place on the list of Best European Destinations. Modern Kotor is as place of every age and group, proud of its multiculturalism as one of its most distinguished features."