

Belgrade, Serbo-Croatian **Beograd** (“**White Fortress**”), city, capital of [Serbia](#). It lies at the [confluence](#) of the [Danube](#) and [Sava](#) rivers in the north-central part of the country.



[Sava River; Belgrade](#)



[Belgrade, Serbia](#)

Belgrade is located at the convergence of three historically important routes of travel between [Europe](#) and the Balkans: an east-west route along the Danube River valley from [Vienna](#) to the [Black Sea](#); another that runs westward along the valley of the Sava River toward Trieste and northern Italy; and a third running southeast along the valleys of the [Morava](#) and [Vardar](#) rivers to the [Aegean Sea](#). To the north and west of Belgrade lies the Pannonian Basin, which includes the great grain-growing region of [Vojvodina](#).

[Sava and Danube rivers' confluence](#)

There is evidence of [Stone Age](#) settlements in the area. The city grew up around an ancient fortress on the Kalemegdan headland that was [encompassed](#) on three sides by the Sava and the Danube. The first fortress was built by the [Celts](#) in the 4th century BCE and was known by the Romans as Singidunum. It was destroyed by the [Huns](#) in 442 and changed hands among the [Sarmatians](#), [Goths](#), and [Gepidae](#) before it was recaptured by the [Byzantine](#) emperor [Justinian](#). It was later held by the [Franks](#) and the [Bulgars](#), and in the 11th century became a frontier town of [Byzantium](#). In 1284 it

came under Serbian rule, and in 1402 Stephen Lazarević made it the capital of Serbia. The Ottoman Turks besieged the city in 1440, and after 1521 it was in their hands except for three periods of occupation by the Austrians (1688–90, 1717–39, and 1789–91).



During the Turkish period Belgrade was a lively commercial centre where goods were traded from various parts of the [Ottoman Empire](#). After the first Serbian uprising under [Karadjordje](#) in 1804, Belgrade became the Serbian capital during 1807–13, but the Turks recaptured it. The Serbs were given control of the [citadel](#) in 1867, when Belgrade once more became the capital of Serbia.

From 1921 Belgrade was the capital of the three successive [Yugoslav](#) states, including the rump [Yugoslavia](#). The city's rapid [population growth](#) since [World War II](#) resulted primarily from the migration from rural areas of Serbia as a consequence of industrialization. Most of the inhabitants are Serbs; the largest non-Serb groups are Croats and Montenegrins.

Since World War II Belgrade has become an industrial city that produces motors, tractors and combines, machine tools, electrical equipment, chemicals, textiles, and building materials. It is the largest commercial centre in Serbia. A number of international railroad lines pass through Belgrade, which is also served by highways and by river [vessels](#) traveling up the Danube from the Black Sea or arriving from western Europe via the [Main-Danube Canal](#). [Nikola Tesla](#) Airport is located west of the city at Surčin.



[Sava River; Belgrade](#)

In the course of its growth, Belgrade spread southward and southeastward over a hilly terrain. A new district called New Belgrade (Novi Beograd) has been built on the plain west of the old city, between the Sava and Danube rivers. The old fortress of Kalemegdan is now a historical monument; its former glacis has been rebuilt as a garden, from which is seen a famous view of the plain across the Sava and the Danube. Belgrade is the site of numerous government offices and is also home to various cultural and educational institutions, including the University of Belgrade, founded in 1863. There are many museums and galleries, of which the oldest, the National Museum (Narodni Muzej), was founded in 1844. Pop. (2011) 1,166,763; (2020 est.) 1,692,768.