

VRELO COLLECTION

JOURNEY III

The Highlands

The Still Point

*Igman & Bjelašnica · Lukomir · Umoljani ·
Konjic*

Ten days · Eight guests

Hosted by the owners in English, French & Bosnian

SUMMER DEPARTURES · JULY & AUGUST 2027

A hosted small-group journey · Request a place

Why we take you up

There is a version of the Bosnian highlands you cannot reach on your own. The road to Lukomir is unsigned and often washed out; the shepherds keep their own hours; the best tables stand in houses that carry no sign at all. This is the journey we host most closely, because it is the one that asks the most of a host.

We built The Still Point around a single idea: that the mountains ask you to slow down, and that slowing down is a skill worth being taught. Over ten summer days we move through only a handful of bases — a mountain house on Bjelašnica, a family guesthouse in the highest village in the country, and at the last a small family hotel on the Neretva at Konjic. We walk when the light is good. We sit at shepherds' tables. We make tea from the herbs we gather, and oil from the St. John's wort that turns the meadows gold in July. One day, by design, has nothing planned at all.

We host it ourselves, in the three languages we live in, because there is no guidebook for this — only people who know the way up, and the way to stay a while.

From the plateau to the river

This is a journey of depth, not distance. Ten days, four bases, one long slow arc from the Olympic plateaus above Sarajevo down to the Neretva at Konjic. We move rarely and stay long, so that each place has time to become familiar rather than merely seen. The days are strung on people rather than sights — the dairy household at Kramari, the Lukomir family at their vats, the carver at his bench in Konjic — one encounter handing the journey to the next, the way the best travel films are cut.

ARRIVE	Sarajevo (SJJ)	Day 1	Transfer up to the Bjelašnica plateau
BASE I	Igman / Bjelašnica	3 nights	Na Krovu Svijetu — high-meadow acclimation, walking days, the herb ritual
BASE II	Lukomir	2 nights	Family-run guesthouses — the highest village, shepherds' tables
BASE III	Umoljani	2 nights	Konak Umoljani — the cold-spring valley, the deliberate nothing day
BASE IV	Konjic	2 nights	Garden City Hotel — the Neretva terrace, the Zanat atelier, Tito's Bunker
DEPART	Sarajevo (SJJ)	Day 10	An hour up the M17, a coffee together, and onward flights

ON PACE

Expect two to four hours of walking on our moving days, on highland tracks rather than technical trails — no scrambling, no exposure. Two days are given over almost entirely to rest. The single most demanding day, the Lukomir–Umoljani traverse, is walked by choice — our vehicles run the same route for anyone who prefers to ride. Blidinje, further west, stands as our weather alternate should the high routes close.

The heart of the journey

Each day is written as an arc rather than an agenda. Timings flex with the weather and the light; the shape holds.

Day 01

Sarajevo → Bjelašnica

Arrival, and the air changes

- AFTERNOON** We meet you at Sarajevo airport and drive up out of the city heat onto the Bjelašnica plateau, where the temperature drops and the air turns to grass and stone. Settle into Na Krovu Svijetu — “on the roof of the world” — our base for the first three nights, with the meadows beginning at the door.
- EVENING** A slow first dinner at the house, an introduction over maps and a glass of something local, and an early night. Tomorrow the walking begins gently; tonight the only task is to arrive.

Day 02

Bjelašnica

The high meadows

- MORNING** A gentle acclimation walk across the Bjelašnica plateau, learning to read the ground — the karst underfoot, the mountain junipers, the first stands of St. John's wort. No summit, no hurry; the point is to let the altitude and the quiet settle.
- AFTERNOON** Return to the house for lunch and rest. In the late afternoon, the first of the plant rituals: we gather *Hypericum perforatum* from the meadows and set the flowers to steep in oil on a sunlit sill, where it will slowly turn red across the days to come.
- EVENING** Dinner at the house. As the light goes, the plateau empties of everyone but us.

Day 03

Bjelašnica

Ridgelines and shepherds

- MORNING** A longer walk along the Bjelašnica ridgelines between the plateau's working farmsteads — households we visit by name and by arrangement. At Kramari †, the family keeps cows, sheep and hens, and the morning's cheese, cream and eggs are tasted at their table; at Ostojići, Didova Farma † raises goats, its young goat cheese eaten within sight of the herd. We stop where we are welcome, for the unhurried talk of people who measure time in seasons.
- AFTERNOON** At Javorov Do — the honey valley † — a small production house turns the meadows into honey, juices and preserves, tasted where they are made. Then a picnic table laid in the open and the walk back at your own pace, the rest of the afternoon yours to read, sleep, or watch the weather move across the range.
- EVENING** We brew mountain tea from the day's gatherings and talk through the shape of the days ahead — the move to Lukomir, and what the highest village asks of its visitors.

The road to the highest village

- MORNING** We leave Bjelašnica on the rough track to Lukomir, the highest permanently inhabited village in Bosnia and Herzegovina, perched on the rim of the Rakitnica canyon at some 1,470 metres. This is a road you would not attempt alone; with us it becomes part of the story.
- AFTERNOON** Arrival at the family-run Lukomir guesthouses, our home for two nights. Stone houses, wool everywhere, wood smoke — the village has kept its shape for centuries. A short walk to the canyon edge before the light softens.
- EVENING** The shepherd's table in Lukomir: a long dinner of what the village makes and keeps — lamb, dairy, foraged greens, bread from the hearth — served in the home of the family who host us.

Lukomir, in its own time

- MORNING** A walk along the Rakitnica canyon rim, one of the deepest and least-touched gorges in the country, with the family's guidance. The stećci — medieval tombstones scattered in the grass — mark how long people have lived and died up here.
- AFTERNOON** Time in the village itself, taken as a working visit: into the summer dairy with our host family to watch the day's milk become kajmak and young cheese, a bowl of kiselo mlijeko — the cold sour milk of the pastures — passed around, and a stop at the honey stalls along the lane, where the village's jars are sold beside wool. The women's knitting, the tending of flocks, the small work of a place that lives by its own hands. Nothing is staged for you; you are simply, briefly, part of it.
- EVENING** A second highland table, quieter than the first, and the deep silence of a village with no through road.

Down into the cold-spring valley

- MORNING** The classic highland traverse on foot — the walk from Lukomir down toward Umoljani, following old shepherds' paths across the meadows, roughly three to four unhurried hours with the range opening around you. Our vehicles carry the bags ahead.
- AFTERNOON** Arrive at Konak Umoljani, in the green valley beneath Mount Obalj. A cold-spring ritual: the Studeni Potok, the “cold stream,” runs clear and icy through the village — we bathe hands and feet in the old way, a small shock that resets the body.
- EVENING** A restful dinner at the konak, herbs from the day pressed into the meal, and an early night before the day that has nothing in it.

Nothing, deliberately

An unburied day

ALL DAY

The day we plan the least. No walk is scheduled, no table booked, no departure to make. Sleep late. Sit by the cold stream. Wander to the old wooden mosque and the legend of the dragon-stone above the village, or don't. This is the still point the journey is named for — the day when the mountains stop being a place you are moving through and become, for a while, simply where you are.

EVENING

We gather, if you wish, for tea and the slow finishing of the St. John's wort oil begun on Bjelašnica — now deep red, ready to bottle and take home.

Down to the river

MORNING

A slow packing morning, then the drive out of the valley — back over the shoulder of Bjelašnica and down the long descent into the Neretva valley. Where the road crests above the river, the road table is laid: cheese and kajmak from the Umoljani dairy, kiselo mlijeko chilled in the stream, bread, and a quiet glass, forty minutes over the water.

AFTERNOON

Down into Konjic, the town where the highlands meet the Neretva, and into Garden City Hotel † — family-run, with a pool and the river running past the terrace. The first town comforts since the plateau; the rest of the afternoon is yours.

EVENING

A walk to the Stara ćuprija, the Ottoman stone bridge finished in 1682, and dinner near the water.

The carver and the bunker

MORNING

The visit the whole descent has been pointing to: the Zanat atelier of the Nikšić family †, where four generations have carved since 1919 and the Konjic technique was inscribed by UNESCO in 2017. Orhan — a former World Bank economist who came home to carve — walks us through the workshop floor and the geometry of the style.

AFTERNOON

Tito's Bunker — ARK D-0 †, the atomic shelter driven into the mountain between 1953 and 1979, now home to a contemporary art biennale. A local expert leads; the corridors are long, and the story is stranger than the corridors.

EVENING

The last full evening: a household supper on the edge of town, at a family table kept for us — wine from the cellar, and the gentian ritual, the bitter root of the high pastures tasted the way the shepherds have always taken it.

The hour home

MORNING

A slow breakfast above the river, the packing of oils and teas, and — if the group wishes — a swim at Boračko jezero, the small glacial lake in the hills above town.

AFTERNOON

The drive back to Sarajevo is a straight hour up the M17. Drop-off at the airport or the old town, and a coffee together before you go — we don't do farewell dinners; ten days ends better with a cup of coffee than with a speech.

† Proposed addition — to be confirmed by the hosts.

Four houses, mountain and river

Na Krovu Svijetu

BJELAŠNICA PLATEAU

“On the roof of the world” — a mountain house set among the high meadows above Sarajevo, where the walking begins at the door and the wool blankets earn their keep after dark. Simple, warm, and entirely given over to the plateau; the herb rituals begin on its sunlit sills.

BEST FOR Walkers, plant people, and anyone who wants the mountains close.

NOT FOR Those needing hotel formality or town amenities at hand.

IN BRIEF · Base I · 3 nights · high-meadow setting · our whole group under one roof

Lukomir Family Guesthouses

LUKOMIR VILLAGE

Stone houses in the highest inhabited village in the country, on the rim of the Rakitnica canyon. We stay in the homes of the families who have kept this place for generations — hearth cooking, hand-knitted wool, and the deep quiet of a village with no through road. The most authentic beds on the journey.

BEST FOR Guests seeking the real texture of highland life.

NOT FOR Those who need private bathrooms and reliable connectivity.

IN BRIEF · Base II · 2 nights · family-run · shepherds' tables in the home

Konak Umoljani

UMOLJANI VILLAGE

A calm konak in the green valley beneath Mount Obalj, beside the cold stream that gives the village its rituals. Wood, stone and mountain light; the natural home for the journey's deliberate nothing day, when the pace drops to the speed of the water.

BEST FOR Rest, reading, and the slow middle of the journey.

NOT FOR Guests wanting a packed itinerary — this is the pause.

IN BRIEF · Base III · 2 nights · valley setting · cold-spring ritual at the door

Garden City Hotel

KONJIC, THE NERETVA VALLEY

A family-run hotel where the highlands hand you back to the world by degrees — a pool, a terrace with the Neretva running past it, and the first hot shower on your own schedule since the plateau. Konjic itself is part of the stay: the Ottoman bridge, the carving atelier, the cold green river.

BEST FOR A soft landing after the mountain houses; swimmers and slow mornings.

NOT FOR Those who want to stay at altitude to the very end.

IN BRIEF · Base IV · 2 nights · river-town comfort · pool and Neretva terrace †

† Proposed addition — to be confirmed by the hosts.

Where we eat, and why

The highlands feed you from close to home — dairy pressed that morning, lamb, foraged greens, honey, and the herbs we gather along the way. Up high there are no restaurants at all; every table below is a room in a house, a cloth laid in the open, or — at the end — a terrace above the river.

VENUE	PLACE		MARKER
The Shepherd's Table, Lukomir	Lukomir village	A long hearth dinner of lamb, fresh dairy and foraged greens in the home of our host family.	Included
Highland Picnic, Bjelašnica ridge	Bjelašnica plateau	A cloth laid in the open among the summer flocks, coffee and cheese from the shepherds.	Included
The Konak Table, Umoljani	Umoljani village	Quiet valley cooking beside the cold stream, herbs from the day pressed into the meal.	Included
The Road Table, the Neretva descent	en route to Konjic	The drive down breaks at a pullout above the river — cheese and kajmak from the Umoljani dairy, kiselo mlijeko chilled in the stream, a quiet glass.	Included
The Household Supper	outskirts of Konjic †	A family table kept for us on the edge of town — wine from the cellar, the long last evening of the journey.	Included
The Garden City Terrace	Konjic †	The hotel's own kitchen above the Neretva — slow breakfasts, and our dependable table in town.	Included

All tables on the journey are included in the per-guest price. Prices are not shown by the plate because there are no plates to buy — these are private meals in private homes, arranged by the hosts.

† Proposed addition — to be confirmed by the hosts.

Guided by those who know the way

The Zanat Atelier — Braća Nikšić †

LED BY · Orhan Nikšić and the carving family, with the hosts

The reason Konjic is on the journey. Four generations of the Nikšić family have carved here since 1919, and the Konjic technique they kept alive was inscribed on UNESCO's list of intangible cultural heritage in 2017. Orhan — a former World Bank economist who came home to carve — walks us through the workshop floor and the geometry of the style, in furniture now sold on four continents.

Tito's Bunker — ARK D-0 †

LED BY · A local expert, with the hosts

An atomic shelter driven into the mountain outside Konjic between 1953 and 1979, kept secret for decades and now — of all things — home to a contemporary art biennale. A local expert leads the tour. The corridors are long; the story is stranger than the corridors.

The Lukomir Canyon & Stećci Walk

LED BY · Our Lukomir host family

A walk along the rim of the Rakitnica canyon guided by the family who live above it, reading the medieval stećci tombstones in the grass and the long human history of the highest village in the land.

The Lukomir Dairy & Honey Visit

LED BY · Our Lukomir host family

The village as a working farm: the summer dairy where the day's milk is turned to kajmak and young cheese before you, kiselo mlijeko poured cold from the crock, and the honey of the high meadows tasted at the stalls along the lane — each jar the work of a household you can name.

The Bjelašnica Farmsteads †

LED BY · The hosts, welcomed by the farming families

A circuit of the plateau's named working farms: the Kramari household's cheese, cream and eggs; the goat dairy of Didova Farma at Ostojići; the Salers cattle of Farma Bjelašnica at Milišići; and the honey valley of Javorov Do — arranged directly with the families through the Umoljani producers' association, tastings at every door.

The Elezovići Herb Household †

LED BY · The herb-growing family, with the hosts

A working household of medicinal-plant growers on the plateau — a hands-on hour among the drying racks, the plants of the July meadows named and worked, a thread that ties directly into the journey's rituals.

The Lukomir–Umoljani Traverse

LED BY · The hosts

The classic highland crossing on foot, three to four unhurried hours over shepherds' paths from the highest village down into the cold-spring valley, with our vehicles carrying the bags ahead.

† Proposed addition — to be confirmed by the hosts.

The plant thread & the water

Every Vrelo journey carries a botanical signature — the plants that define its ground, worked into the days as something you make with your hands rather than merely observe. In the highlands the thread is threefold, and it runs the length of the journey.

Hypericum perforatum
ST. JOHN'S WORT

The gold of the July meadows. We gather the flowers on Bjelašnica and set them to steep in oil, watching it turn slowly red across the days — bottled and carried home on the nothing day at Umoljani.

Gentiana lutea
GREAT YELLOW GENTIAN

The bitter root of the high pastures, and the shepherds' oldest tonic. Dug on the Bjelašnica plateau and tasted as gentian bitters on the last evening in Konjic, where the mountains meet the river.

Juniperus
MOUNTAIN JUNIPER

Underfoot the whole way — in the karst, in the smoke of the hearth, in the spirit poured at the tables. The resinous backbone of the highland palate.

THE TACTILE LAYER

The rituals are not performances; they are the small skilled acts the mountains have always required. We make mountain tea from what we gather along the ridgelines, and press St. John's wort oil over the length of the journey. At shepherds' tables in Lukomir we eat what the village keeps by hand. And in the Umoljani valley we practise the cold-spring ritual at the Studeni Potok — hands and feet in the icy water in the old way, a deliberate shock that clears the head.

WATER & STILLNESS

Where other journeys hold their spiritual weight in a tekke or a spring shrine, the highlands hold it in silence and cold water. The nothing day at Umoljani is its own contemplative rite — the still point after which the journey is named — and the Neretva at Konjic closes what the Studeni Potok began.

What to know before you request

ARRIVAL	Sarajevo International Airport (SJJ). We meet you on arrival and transfer up to the Bjelašnica plateau, roughly one hour.
DEPARTURE	Sarajevo (SJJ) on Day 10, from Konjic — a straight hour up the M17. An optional final night in Sarajevo can be arranged on request.
ON THE ROAD	Two ways to travel: rent a car and drive yourself, in easy convoy with the hosts, or have us provide a car and driver for the ten days, arranged at booking. The roughest tracks — the Lukomir road above all — are taken in the hosts' 4×4s regardless.
GROUP SIZE	Eight guests, two to a room. Designed around pairs; some bases may be taken over entirely by our group.
HOSTING	Hosted by the two owners, in English, French and Bosnian — with private time built into every day.
FITNESS	Moderate. Two to four hours of walking on moving days over highland tracks — no scrambling or exposure. The Lukomir–Umoljani traverse is the longest day on foot and is optional — vehicles run the same route.
WEATHER	High summer, July and August. Cool mornings and warm days at altitude; afternoon mountain weather is possible. Layers and proper footwear are essential.
TERRAIN	Unpaved highland roads and footpaths. Highland logistics are the reason this journey is hosted — the road to Lukomir above all cannot be done alone.

INCLUDED

- All four bases, nine nights' accommodation
- Every meal on the journey — breakfasts, lunches, dinners, the feast tables among them; some hosted, some yours alone
- Airport pickup, and the hosts' 4×4s on the mountain tracks — self-drive or a provided driver elsewhere, chosen at booking
- Both hosts across the journey — at the introductions and the key tables, with private time built in
- All guided experiences — local experts where a visit calls for one
- The Zanat atelier visit and Tito's Bunker entry †
- The plant and water rituals, materials included
- Working-farm visits — the Lukomir dairy and the honey stalls, tastings included
- Road tables on transfer days — cheese, kajmak, juices and wine with a view

NOT INCLUDED

- International flights to and from Sarajevo
- Rental car and fuel, for those who choose to drive themselves
- Travel and medical insurance
- Personal purchases and gratuities
- Optional final night in Sarajevo
- Personal hiking gear and footwear

† Proposed addition — to be confirmed by the hosts.

Requesting your place

The Still Point runs in high summer only, when the routes are open and the highland villages are lived-in. Two departures run in 2027; each takes eight guests, hosted by the owners.

DEPARTURE	WINDOW	CHARACTER
The High Summer	July 9 – 18, 2027	Long light, warm days, the shepherds at full season. St. John's wort at its gold.
The August Door	August 13 – 22, 2027	Deep summer at altitude — the meadows heavy, the evenings gold.

From €7,600 per guest

Sharing a room — two guests to a room. Travelling alone: a room of your own adds €600, by arrangement — the mountain houses hold few rooms. Everything on the ground included · self-drive or provided driver, with the hosts' 4×4s on the mountain tracks.

A full departure, privately — all eight places for one party, on dates of your choosing — from €9,100 per guest.

HOW TO REQUEST A PLACE

- 1 Request. Send us your preferred departure and party. There is no instant checkout — every place is confirmed personally.
- 2 Reply. We answer personally within 48 hours to talk through fit, dates and any questions.
- 3 Deposit. A deposit of 25% secures your place on the departure.
- 4 Balance. The remaining balance is due 60 days before departure.

On the researched additions

The stays, tables and rituals in this document are drawn from the Vrelo Collection inventory. Items marked with † are researched additions proposed to fill highland logistics gaps — chiefly the Konjic chapter: the Garden City stay, the Zanat atelier and Tito's Bunker — and are to be confirmed by the hosts. The sources consulted for those additions are listed below.

1. Zanat — the Nikšić family woodcarving atelier and museum, Konjic; four generations since 1919. <https://zanat.org/about-us/the-story-of-zanat/>
2. Konjic woodcarving — UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, 2017. <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/konjic-woodcarving-01288>
3. Orhan Nikšić — former World Bank economist; Zanat furniture sold across four continents (Reuters). <https://www.reuters.com/article/world/hand-carved-wooden-furniture-helps-put-bosnian-town-on-the-map-idUSKBN1K3232/>
4. Tito's Bunker ARK D-O — Konjic; expert-led visits and practicalities. <https://www.bosnia-spirit.com/tours/tito-bunker-konjic-tour/>
5. D-O ARK Underground — the contemporary art biennial inside the bunker. <https://biennialfoundation.org/2017/04/the-4th-project-biennial-d-o-ark-underground/>
6. Garden City Hotel — Konjic; pool and Neretva-side setting. <https://gardencity.ba/en/>
7. Stara čuprija — the Ottoman stone bridge at Konjic, completed 1682. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stara_%C4%86uprija
8. Konak Umoljani — Umoljani village, Bjelašnica. <https://www.booking.com/hotel/ba/konak-umoljani.en-gb.html>
9. Na Krovu Svijetu — Gornji Lukomir / Bjelašnica. https://www.tripadvisor.com/HotelsNear-g17492704-d12934229-Bjelasnica_Olympic_Mountain_Ski_Centre-Federation_of_Bosnia_and_Herzegovina.html
10. Lukomir–Umoljani highland traverse and Lukomir village context. <https://www.bosnia-spirit.com/guides/lukomir-village-hike-guide/>
11. Lukomir village life — shepherd households, honey and wool stalls. <https://www.balkanlocals.com/en/lukomir-bihs-most-isolated-village/>
12. Bjelašnica farmsteads circuit — Kramari, Didova Farma (Ostojići), Farma Bjelašnica (Milišići), Javorov Do, Elezovići. <https://hotelnomad.ba/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Ponuda-vanjskih-aktivnosti.pdf>
13. Izvorna grupa bjelašničkih sela — Umoljani producers' association (dairy, honey, herbs). <https://mbv.ba/selo/umoljani/>

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