

# Cultural Echoes of Novi Sad



This tour explores how public spaces, movement, memory, and everyday interactions shape the collective identity of Novi Sad. Through streets, bridges, parks, murals, and shared spaces, participants are invited to reflect on how cities influence the way people connect, behave, remember, and belong.



# Practical information



Starting location: Liberty Square  
Novi Sad, Serbia  
(45°15'18.0"N 19°50'43.4"E)



Duration: ~130 minutes  
Distance: 8 km by foot  
(Around 10,000 steps)



Material  
Needed



Phone  
Comfortable shoes  
Optional: notebook



Accessibility Level: Easy (flat  
route, urban pedestrian zones)



Stay with the group, be careful in traffic,  
and enjoy the walk through the city



Need more details?  
Scan the QR code and  
explore the full tour.





# Stop 1 : Liberty Square

You are standing in the central square of Novi Sad. At first glance, the square feels open and familiar — like an ordinary everyday public space.

But public spaces are never neutral. In 1961, this square was transformed into a film set, transforming it from a civic public space into a symbol of occupation and fear, for the movie “Violence in the Square.”

For the purpose of filming, the monument of Svetozar Miletić—a Serbian lawyer, politician, journalist, and one of the leading advocates for the rights of Serbs in the Austro-Hungarian Empire during the 19th century—was temporarily covered and transformed into a Nazi-style obelisk. For a brief moment, the symbolic heart of the city was visually and emotionally reshaped into something entirely different.

SCAN ME!



This square has not always had the same meaning. Over time, it has shifted between political, cultural, and social functions. What we see today is only one version of its identity. Public spaces are constantly redefined depending on how they are used and interpreted.



Continue walking past the cathedral along Zmaj Jovina Street.





## Stop 2 : Zmaj Jovina Street

This street was once a korzo — a place of social interaction governed by unwritten rules. People came here to see and be seen. Communication happened through glances, not words. Zmaj Jovina Street shows us how public space can shape behavior. It creates invisible rules about how people connect, how people are expected to behave and how relationships begin.

Today, the street is filled with cafés, shops, and constant movement.

Communication is faster, more direct, often digital. And yet, if you slow down, you can still sense traces of that older rhythm—the idea that connection can begin with something as simple as a shared look.

\*Korzo is a traditional public promenade where people walk, meet, and socialize. In Novi Sad, it has been an important part of city life for generations, especially in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when evening walks along the Korzo were a daily social tradition that continues today.



When you reach the end of the street, turn left and continue walking. After about 300 meters, Matica Srpska will be on your right side.



Public space is not neutral. It shapes how people behave and who feels welcome. While some express themselves freely, others may feel observed, judged, or excluded. This raises an important question: who is this space really for, and who might feel left out?



### Stop 3 : Matica Srpska



Matica Srpska was founded in 1826 in Pest/Budapest and moved to Novi Sad in 1864; it is described as the oldest and most distinguished Serbian cultural and scientific institution. The building itself was originally connected to Marija Trandafil's endowment for Serbian Orthodox orphans, was built in the early 20th century, and Matica Srpska moved into it in 1928.

Marija Trandafil's answer was not only one choice.

Her legacy connected social care, education, shared spaces and culture. That is why this building is important: it shows how private wealth and personal loss can become public good, and how one person's decision can remain visible in the life of a city.

Matica srpska moved into the building that was built in 1912 in 1928, and the orphanage was moved to Sajlovo.



What can one person give to a city that lasts for generations?

Novi Sad has paid tribute to a great benefactor by naming the square where the headquarters of Matica Srpska is located, as well as the Novi Sad elementary school in Veternik.



Marija Trandafil is not only a historical figure, but an example of how personal experience can be transformed into public good. Her decision to invest her wealth in education, culture, and charitable work shows that individuals can shape society and cities through long-term contributions. This connects personal values with civic responsibility and highlights how care can become part of public life.



## Stop 4 : Gimnazijska Street – Mural "Serbian Athens"

This wall is not just a surface for art; it is a space of ongoing transformation, debate, and public expression. Over the years, it has carried different layers of meaning. For many citizens and local street art communities, the mural "The Only Truth" by French artist Guillaume Alby (Remed) became an important symbol of contemporary urban culture in Novi Sad because of its recognizable visual style and strong presence in the city center.

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In 2017, the mural was suddenly painted over during the night as part of a city-approved renovation of the passage, without prior public discussion. The decision triggered strong reactions from artists, activists, and citizens. Graffiti messages, public commentary, and media discussions followed, turning the wall itself into a site of civic dialogue about art, public space, and who decides what remains visible in the city.



Unlike gallery exhibitions, murals remain part of everyday public life. They become part of the visual memory of the city, carrying stories about the people, culture, and atmosphere of a specific time and place. What is shown, preserved, or removed is often the result of decisions made by institutions, artists, and communities. These decisions influence how history is remembered and interpreted. This raises a key question: who decides what remains visible in the city?



## Stop 5 : Dunavski Park – Swan Lake

The park is linked to the poet Mika Antić, who wrote about love in a way that was both tender and honest. He didn't idealize love as something perfect—instead, he saw it as something real, sometimes fragile, and sometimes something we must let go of. He once described love as a book: if it becomes painful or empty, it is okay to close it.

The park is also a cultural space shaped by everyday use and shared experience. It is a place where people slow down, observe, and coexist. Unlike streets focused on movement, this environment supports staying, reflection, and informal social interaction.

The park's lake is artificial, created when the former marshland was transformed into a public park in 1895. The small island was originally named after Empress Elisabeth ("Sisi"), and a weeping willow was planted there in her memory after her assassination in 1898. For many years, the lake was home to Isa and Bisa, a pair of swans that became beloved symbols of Dunavski Park and generations of Novi Sad residents.



Scan me





## Stop 6 : Danube Quay – Movement & Shared Space



You are now standing at the Danube quay. This is one of the most dynamic spaces in Novi Sad — constantly moving, constantly changing. Unlike previous stops, where people stayed, observed, or interacted in subtle ways, this space is defined by movement.

People walk, cycle, pass by each other without stopping. Some are alone, some are together. Some are in a hurry, others are slowing down. This path is part of EuroVelo 6 — a route that connects multiple countries, cultures, and experiences. So this is not only a local space. It is part of something larger.

But here is the key question:

When we share space with others without interacting — are we still connected?



Different parts of the quay are used in different ways — some spaces are busy and social, while others feel quieter, more local, or focused on recreation. This shows how movement and public space shape different experiences of the city.

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Even when we don't interact directly, we shape each other's experience. Every movement influences someone else.



Walk towards Varadin Bridge (5 minutes). Stop at the middle point of the bridge.



## Stop 7 : Varadin Bridge – Reconstruction & Memory, Bridge of connection



During the 1999 NATO bombing, bridges in Novi Sad became more than infrastructure. Citizens gathered on them in acts of protest, solidarity, and resistance, turning these spaces into symbols of collective memory and civic courage. The previous bridge was destroyed during the bombing, and what you see today is a reconstruction. This changes how we understand the space — not only as a place of connection, but also as a reminder of loss, resilience, and the possibility of rebuilding after disruption.

**SCAN ME**



Cities are shaped not only by construction — but by destruction and rebuilding. Public space carries memory, even when it is not visible. The question is: Do we recognize it?

Walk down from Varadin Bridge toward Podgrađe and follow the stairs leading to the viewpoint below Petrovaradin Fortress.

Fun fact: reaching the fortress area from Podgrađe includes climbing 214 steps.





## Stop 8 : Podgradje VIEWPOINT – “What is Protected Heritage?”

You are now standing at the viewpoint in Podgrađe, overlooking Petrovaradin Fortress and the Danube. From here, you can see one of the most recognizable symbols of Novi Sad. Petrovaradin Fortress is protected as cultural heritage. But what does that actually mean?

Built between 1692 and 1780, Petrovaradin Fortress is protected because it represents centuries of shared history. More than a military structure, it has become a symbol of the city's identity, showing how places gain new meanings as societies change.



Heritage is not only about objects. It is about meaning.



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Not everything old is protected.  
And not everything protected is understood.



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Continue walking downhill from Petrovaradin Fortress toward the riverside promenade. Follow the Danube quay until you reach the sports courts and recreation area next to Štrand.

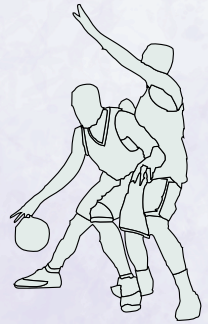




## Stop 9 : “Who is This Space For?” (Sport & Access)

You are now in a space designed for sport and physical activity.

Here you can find:  
basketball courts  
outdoor gyms  
open training areas



At first glance, this may seem like a space open to everyone. But if you observe more closely, you may notice that people experience and use it differently. Factors such as confidence, experience, age, gender, or social expectations can influence how comfortable people feel participating in activities here.

Even when spaces are physically open, they are not always equally used. Design, culture, and confidence all affect participation.





## Stop 10 : Freedom Bridge – Hajdin's masterpiece



You are now standing at Freedom Bridge. From here, the river, the fortress, the skyline, and many of the places explored during this tour come together as one connected landscape.

Designed by Serbian engineer Nikola Hajdin and opened in 1981, Freedom Bridge became one of Novi Sad's most recognizable landmarks. Destroyed during the 1999 NATO bombing and rebuilt in 2005, it stands today as a symbol of resilience, continuity, and renewal.



SCAN ME

From here, the city opens up. The view stretches across the Danube, the fortress, and the urban landscape, offering a rare moment to step back and see everything as a whole. After moving through streets, parks, and intimate spaces, this final stop brings together the central themes of the tour: connection, movement, memory, and change.



Throughout this journey, you explored how public spaces in Novi Sad are shaped by movement, memory, interaction and everyday use. From its military and riverside past, marked by Petrovaradin Fortress and the Danube, to its more recent identity as European Youth Capital and European Capital of Culture, Novi Sad shows how a city changes together with its people. Streets, parks, bridges, murals and shared spaces do not only reflect history; they influence how people move, meet, participate and feel that they belong. At the same time, people reshape the city through their choices, habits, questions and care for public space.

The identity of Novi Sad is therefore not fixed, but constantly created through the relationship between place, community and everyday life. Freedom in the city is not only about movement, but also about awareness and responsibility — recognizing that shared spaces become more welcoming, accessible and inclusive when people use, respect and protect them together.







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