



Welcome to Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Heart-Shaped Land
Where East and West Meet

Year Programme
V.2013

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1. Introduction

We, AFS in Bosnia and Herzegovina, look forward to host you in our country and to help you to make the most of your AFS-experience! Your time with AFS can be a wonderful, enriching, interesting adventure. The focus of all AFS programs is intercultural learning – and if you keep an open mind, you will learn a tremendous amount of new things in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Your experience will certainly be unique.

Now, as you are still at home, it is the absolute best time for you to prepare yourself to go abroad, to read about Bosnia and Herzegovina and start language training. This booklet is meant to give you a first introduction to Bosnia and Herzegovina, to the experience you will have and to the AFS program in our country.

Dobrodošli! Добродошли! - Welcome!



2. AFS in Bosnia and Herzegovina

AFS programs in Bosnia and Herzegovina are organized by the non-for-profit, non-governmental organisation **UG Interkulturni susreti u Bosni i Hercegovini (ISU)** or in English *Intercultural meetings in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, in the cooperation with *AFS Intercultural Programs, Inc.* and in the cooperation with *European Federation for Intercultural Learning (EFIL)* where ISU is one of the member organisations.



History of AFS programmes in Bosnia and Herzegovina...

AFS high school programs with the former Yugoslavia began in 1967-68 when the first five Yugoslav students arrived to the United States for a year long stay. Since then more than 800 Yugoslavian students were sent to the USA and more than 500 American students spent a trimester or a year in Yugoslavia. Because of the civil war in Yugoslavia, AFS decided to suspend the hosting program in Yugoslavia in 1991 and AFS programs in Yugoslavia were completely cancelled in 1992.

The first initiators of restarting AFS exchange programs in BiH were Mrs. Inge Rauschnig and Mr. Christian Steiner from Germany accompanied with AFS Germany. In 2001 they have managed to collect donations for sending 6 students for one year in Germany in 2002/2003. After return to BiH, these students started actively volunteering and with help of AFS Germany and Mr. Steiner have selected new students. In 2004 they decided to officially establish an organization named *Interkulturni susreti u Bosni i Hercegovini* (Intercultural meetings in BiH) or shortly UG ISU BIH or ISU which was registered by the Ministry of Justice of BiH in October 2004.

From the very beginning of ISU there was a strong focus on recruiting participants in the whole Bosnia and Herzegovina. This has resulted in volunteer base that is active in the major cities of the country, with more than 35 volunteers in the chapters Sarajevo and Banja Luka and headquarters in Sarajevo. Since 2002, ISU has sent 118 students abroad



as participants of AFS student exchange programs and hosted 16 students from Germany, Italy, Belgium, Brazil, USA, Poland, Czech Republic and Turkey.

Visit www.afs.ba/welcome-to-bih/about-afs-in-bih for more information.

3. Bosnia and Herzegovina

We are happy and proud that you have decided to go to Bosnia and Herzegovina for your AFS experience. We would like to introduce our country to you.

3.1 Facts and Numbers

Location and Size

Bosnia and Herzegovina is located in the western Balkans in South-East Europe, bordering Croatia to the North and South-West, Serbia to the East, and Montenegro to the South-East. The size of Bosnia and Herzegovina is 51,129 sq km and there is 20km of coast line in the Adriatic Sea.

Geographical Regions

There are two main geographical regions: *Bosnia* and *Herzegovina*. Bosnia occupies the northern areas which are roughly four fifths of the entire country, while Herzegovina occupies the rest in the south part of the country.



Population

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a multi-religion and multicultural country. According to the 1991 census, Bosnia and Herzegovina had a population of 4,377,033. Ethnically, 43% were Bosniaks, 31% Serbs and 17% Croats with 6% Yugoslavian and 2% of various other ethnicities. Muslims constitute 45% of the population, Serb Orthodox 36%, Roman Catholics 15%, and other groups, including Jews and Protestants, 4%.

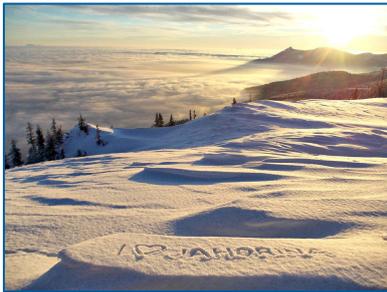
Climate

The Northern part of Bosnia and Herzegovina has Continental climate which means that the summer is very warm (25-35C) and winter is very cold (0 to -20C) with a lot of snow. The Southern part of the country has Mediterranean climate where the summer is very warm (25 - 40C) and winter is mild with rain and strong winds.

Landscape and nature

Country is mostly mountainous, encompassing the central Dinaric Alps. The North-Eastern parts reach into the Pannonian basin, while in the South it borders the Adriatic Sea. Central Bosnia is the most mountainous part of Bosnia featuring predominate mountains Vlašić, Čvrsnica, and Prenj. Eastern Bosnia also features mountains like Trebević, Jahorina, Igman, Bjelašnica and Treskavica. It was here that the 1984 Winter Olympics were held.

Close to 50% of Bosnia and Herzegovina is forested. Most forest areas are in Central, Eastern and Western parts of Bosnia. Northern Bosnia contains very fertile agricultural land along the river Sava.



Cities

Major cities are: capital Sarajevo in central BiH, Banja Luka and Bijać in the North-West, Bijeljina and Tuzla in the North-East, Zenica and Doboј in the central part of Bosnia and Mostar in Herzegovina.



Visit these websites for more information:

AFS BIH website: www.afs.ba/welcome-to-bih/about-bosnia-and-herzegovina

CIA World Factbook: www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bk.html

BH Tourism: www.bhtourism.ba/eng

Enjoy Life BiH - Promo Video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=rinQSOVUvrU

3.2 Brief History

- Through all known history, the region was populated by a number of different peoples speaking distinct languages. Rome completes its annexation of the region in the 9th century and by the end of the 6th century the all area was populated by the Slavs who migrated here from the East Europe.

- **Medieval Bosnia and Bosnian Kingdom (958–1463)**

Medieval Bosnian country was for the first time mentioned in 958 in *De administrando imperio* written by the byzantine emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus as a small country in the today's central-eastern Bosnia. The most powerful rulers or “ban” were ban Kulin and Stefan II Kotromanić who expanded Bosnia to the territory of today's Herzegovina. The first crowned ruler and establisher of the Bosnian kingdom was Tvrtko I Kotromanić who expanded Bosnia during the 14th century



also to some parts of today's Dalmatia and Montenegro. The last Bosnian king Stjepan I Tomašević was executed in 1463 by Ottomans and that was the end of Bosnian kingdom.

- **Ottoman Era (1463–1878)**

During the rule of Ottoman Empire, Bosnia was a province called Bosnian eyelet/vilayet and has kept its historical name and territorial integrity trough 415 years. The Ottomans have brought Islam to Bosnia, but in the same time there were living Christian-Catholics, Orthodox-Christians and a significant number of Sephardic and Ashkenazy Jews came to Bosnia from Spain and central Europe. The followers of all four religions were living in peace together and all of them were free to liberally practice their religion. In the 19th century Ottoman Empire was loosing the power and eventually has ceded the administration of Bosnia to the Austro-Hungarian Empire through the Treaty of Berlin in 1878.



- **Austro-Hungarian Rule (1878–1918)**

After annexing Bosnia and Herzegovina, Austro-Hungarian authorities did much to codify laws, introduce new political practices, develop industry, improve transportation and generally to provide for modernization in BiH. Interesting fact is that the Austrians brought trams to BiH and Sarajevo was the first city with electric trams in Europe. In the begin of 20th century, the idea of unified South Slavic state became very popular in the region and it culminated in Sarajevo on June 28, 1914, when Gavrilo Princip, member of the movement Young Bosnia assassinated the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand. This event became the spark that set off World War I.



- **The First Yugoslavia (1918–1941)**

Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes was formed in 1918 and was ruled by the Serbian Karađorđević dynasty. The Kingdom included the previously independent kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro and the South Slav territories in areas formerly subject to the Austro-Hungarian Empire: Dalmatia, Croatia-Slavonia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Vojvodina. King Alexander I proclaimed a royal dictatorship and renamed the state Yugoslavia in 1929.

- **World War II (1941–1945)**

Yugoslavia was invaded by Germany on April 6, 1941 and was reorganized into four provinces under foreign rule. In the same time, Yugoslavs under the leadership of Josip Broz Tito organized their own anti-fascist multi-ethnic resistance group, the Partisans. In 1943 they have established the Democratic Federal Yugoslavia which included six federal states: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia.

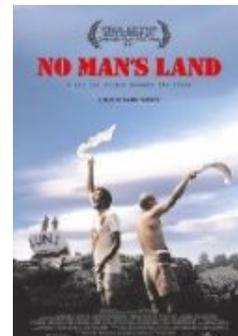


- **Socialist Yugoslavia (1945–1992)**

In 1945 Yugoslavia was liberated and renamed to the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia which included beside the 6 federal states also two autonomous provinces Vojvodina and Kosovo and Metohija. By the new constitution in 1963, the republic's name is changed to Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was one of the largest, most developed and diverse countries in the Balkans. Yugoslavia was a mix of ethnic groups and religions, with Orthodox Christianity, Catholicism and Islam being the main religions.

- **Fall of Yugoslavia and Conflicts (1991-1995)**

Parallel with the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe during the late 1980s and early 1990s, Yugoslavia experienced a period of political and economic crisis. Political leaders used nationalist rhetoric to erode a common Yugoslav identity and fuel fear and mistrust among different ethnic groups. In June 1991 Slovenia and Croatia have declared their independence and in March 1992 Bosnia and Herzegovina declared independence too. This was followed by warfare first shortly in Slovenia, then in Croatia and lasted the longest in Bosnia and Herzegovina till the Dayton Peace Agreement which was signed in December, 14th 1995 by the presidents of Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia.



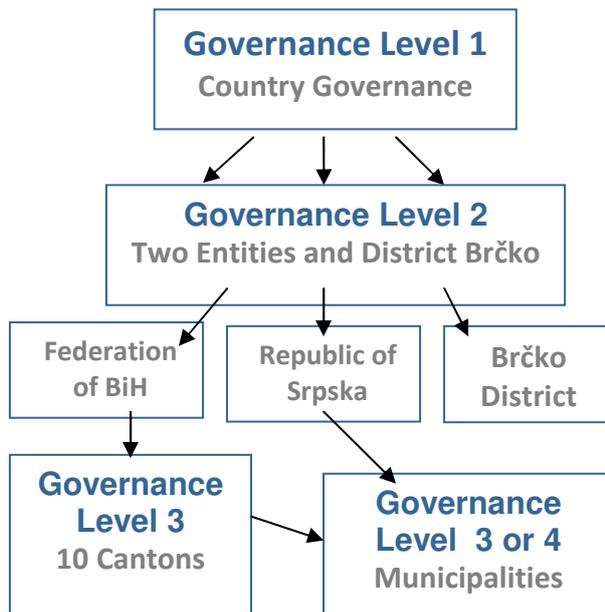
For more information on war in Bosnia and Herzegovina 1992-1995 and the conflicts in the territory of former Yugoslavia, please visit the website of *International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia* (www.icty.org/sid/322).

Read the Dayton Peace Accords and the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina here: *Office of the High Representative and EU Special Representative* (www.ohr.int/dpa/default.asp?content_id=380).

Watch the movie *No Man's Land* (2001) directed by Danis Tanović and awarded with Oscar for best foreign language film in 2002 (www.imdb.com/title/tt0283509).

- **June 2008:** Signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) with European Union. Learn more about the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Road to the European Union on the website of *Delegation of the European Union to Bosnia and Herzegovina* at www.europa.ba.

3.3 Government and politics



Yellow – Federation of BiH
 Orange – Republika Srpska
 Blue – Brčko Distrikt

Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Instead of one president, Bosnia and Herzegovina has the **Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina** which has three members (Bosniak, Serb, Croat). The Chair of the Presidency rotates among three members, each elected as the Chair for an eight-month term within their four-year term as a member.

The Chair of the Council of Ministers or the Prime Minister is nominated by the Presidency and approved by the House of Representatives.

The Parliamentary Assembly is the lawmaking body in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It consists of two houses: the House of Peoples and the House of Representatives.

The Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina is the supreme, final arbiter of legal matters.

As a result of the Dayton Accords, the civilian peace implementation is supervised by the **High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina (OHR)** selected by the Peace Implementation Council. The High Representative has many governmental and legislative powers, including the dismissal of elected and non-elected officials.

3. 4 Educational System

- A. Primary School** is obligatory and it lasts 9 years. Children start visiting school when they are 6 years old. All subjects in every year are obligatory predetermined. After finishing the 9th year, students have to pass final exam in order to attend secondary school.
- B. Secondary School** is not obligatory. Students need to pass admission test in order to start visiting wished secondary school. There are three different types of secondary schools:
- 1. Gymnasium:** lasts 4 years; In some gymnasiums, in the 3rd year students can choose direction (language-, math and informatics-, science- and social subjects direction). After finishing last year, students have to pass final exam in order to get diploma and to apply for the admission at university.
 - 2. Professional high school:** lasts 4 years; Some professional high schools are: medical-, economical-, electrotechnical-, music-, art-high school. After finishing last year, students have to pass final exam in order to get diploma and to apply for the admission at university.
 - 3. Craft high school:** lasts 3 years; Some of craft high schools are: school for carpenter, locksmith and other. After finishing this school, students can not apply for the admission at the university. In order to do that, they have to visit one year more at one of the professional high schools and to pass final exam.
- C. University** – Students have to pass admission test in order to start visiting wished faculty at university. Some of faculties are: medical, law, economics, electrotechnic, journalism, languages etc. Faculty lasts between 3 and 6 years. After getting a bachelor diploma, students can continue their education at university and get master diploma or finish doctor disertation.

Education in BiH is decentralized. There is Ministry of education of Republika Srpska which regulates educational system in Republika Srpska; Section for education in Brčko district which regulates education only in this district and 10 ministries of education in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, one in each of 10 cantons.

Grades:	Primary and secondary school	University
	5 – excellent	10 - excellent
	4 – very good	9 – very good
	3 – good	7-8 - good
	2 – sufficient	6 - sufficient
	1 – failing	5 - failing

3.5 Currency

Currency name: konvertibilna marka (KM)
 1KM = 100 KF (konvertibilni fening)
 Currency Code: BAM
 Currency Course: 1KM = 1.95583 EUR

There are two different groups of paper bills: one designed for Federation BiH and the other one for Republika Srpska. The difference is in the historical persons which are presented on the bills. The both group of bills are used in the whole area of BiH and people doesn't even notice the difference anymore.

Coins: KF: 5, 10, 20 and 50
 KM: 1, 2 and 5



Federation of BiH

Republika Srpska

3.6 Culture and Sports

Bosnia and Herzegovina has rich **literature**. The most famous poet is Mak Dizdar and the most famous writer Ivo Andrić who got the Nobel Prize for his novel "*The Bridge on the river Drina*".

The most popular traditional BiH song is *sevdalinka* which developed during the Ottoman era. Pop and Rock music has a tradition here as well, with many **famous musicians** and bands including Goran Bregović, Zdravko Čolić, Crvena Jabuka, Bijelo Dugme, Plavi Orkestar and others. Jazz has its place in BiH too. Since 1996 Jazz Fest Sarajevo takes places every year in the first week of November and offers the world most popular jazz interpreters.

Most famous BiH **movie makers** are Mirza Idrizović, Danis Tanović (known for Academy Award- and Golden Globe-winning movie *No Man's Land*), Jasmila Žbanić (Golden Bear Award for *Grbavica*) and Emir Kusturica. Sarajevo Film Festival, founded in 1994, has become the biggest and most influencing in South-Eastern Europe.

The most important international **sporting event** in the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina was the hosting of the **14th Winter Olympics**, held in Sarajevo from the 7th to February 19, 1984.



3.7 Holidays in BiH

Holidays celebrated in the whole country are:

- January, the 1st and the 2nd - New Year
- May, the 1st (eventually and the 2nd) – Labor Day

Holidays celebrated in Federation of BiH:

- March, the 1st – Day of Independence
- November, the 25th - National Day

Holidays celebrated in Republika Srpska:

- January, the 9th - Day of Republika Srpska
- May, the 9th – Day of the Victory over Fascism
- November, The 21st – Day of the Establishment of Peace Agreement

Religious holidays:

- January, the 7th - Orthodox Christmas
- Catholic Easter
- Orthodox Easter
- Eid al-Fitr or Ramadan Bayram
- Eid al-Adha or Kurban Bayram
- December, the 25th - Catholic Christmas

School breaks:

- Summer school break: from the end of the first week in June till the first week of September
- Winter school break: January

3. 8 Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian Language

There are three official languages in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian language. They are officially three different languages, but they are practically the same except slightly different accent and some different words. The most used common term in international community for these three languages is “b/h/s”. There are also two official alphabets: Cyrillic and Latin.

For example: The school books in BiH are written half in Latin and half in Cyrillic Alphabet, but some books may be written also only in one of the alphabets. The school classes are in Bosnian or Serbian or Croatian language depending in which part of the BiH the student will be placed.

Do not get scared! By learning any of these three languages, you will actually know all three of them! ☺

These are our two alphabets:

A a	B b	C c	Č č	Ć ć	D d	Dž dž	Đ đ	E e	F f
А а	Б б	Ц ц	Ч ч	Ћ ћ	Д д	Ђ ђ	Ђ ђ	Е е	Ф ф
[a]	[b]	[t͡s]	[t͡ʃ]	[t͡ɕ]	[d]	[d͡ʒ]	[d͡ʒ]	[e]	[f]
G g	H h	I i	J j	K k	L l	Lj lj	M m	N n	Nj nj
Г г	Х х	И и	Ј ј	К к	Л л	Љ љ	М м	Н н	Њ њ
[g]	[x/h]	[i]	[j]	[k]	[l]	[ʎ]	[m]	[n]	[ɲ]
O o	P p	R r	S s	Š š	T t	U u	V v	Z z	Ž ž
О о	П п	Р р	С с	Ш ш	Т т	У у	В в	З з	Ж ж
[o]	[p]	[r]	[s]	[ʃ]	[t]	[u]	[v]	[z]	[ʒ]

Language is **a crucial part of your AFS-experience**. To profit from your stay abroad and to learn about another culture, language is essential. So start right away, while still at home, to learn b/h/s or, if you know already a bit, to improve your language skills. It will pay off!

The language is the most important means to make friends, to be integrated into your host family, your school and anywhere else. People over here will appreciate it when they see your willingness to learn our language. We know it's not easy, but if you are eager to learn to speak b/h/s, you will succeed as the AFS students did before.

If you already know some b/h/s, **don't hesitate to practice** it right from the beginning of your stay and, please, don't be afraid to make mistakes or not to get the accent right! The only thing that counts in the beginning is to be understood.

A must is a bilingual **dictionary** to bring along for your stay to translate from your native language into b/h/s and the other way round. AFS in Bosnia and Herzegovina will support your language learning. Thus **language training** will be offered locally after your arrival in your host town and will be **financed by AFS**.

Here are a few basic words to learn already by heart:

"DOBRO JUTRO"	- Good morning
"DOBAR DAN"	- Good afternoon
"DOBRO VEČ(ch)E"	- Good evening
"LAKU NOĆ(ch)"	- Good night
"ZDRAVO"	- Formal "Hello"
"Ć(ch)AO"	- Informal "Hello"
"HVALA"	- Thank you
"MOLIM"	- Please
"DA"	- Yes
"NE"	- No

4. You and Your AFS Host Family in BiH

Everything starts with **first "Hello"**. It is very likely that your family will greet you with **handshakes** or even **with kissing in the cheek**, because this is the customary way of greeting in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Among Serbian population it is common to kiss three times and by other population one or two times.

You shake hands or kiss when you meet and when you say goodbye. Sometimes you shake hands in order to say thank you. Anyway, you can't do anything wrong by shaking someone's hand when meeting. When you just meet a new person it is normal just to shake hands, even among young people.



Are you wondering **what to call your host parents**? Well, we suggest that you call your host parents what their Bosnian children call them. In most cases that will be "Majko", "Mama" for mother and "Oče", "Tata" for the father. If you feel uncomfortable with calling your host parents like that, you can talk to them and ask them if you could call them by their first names.

There are two ways of **addressing people** in b/h/s. "Ti" is the familiar form used within families and with friends or people of your own age. "Vi" is formal and used by younger people towards older people, between older people or just between people who don't know each other well. You should call all members of your family "Ti" and the parents by the name that their children call them.

This is the best way to become a part of your Bosnian family. In comparison to other countries, Bosnians are very **direct** persons in speech. Often, we formulate questions, offerings or requests in a very straight and direct way by saying what we mean. Please do not interpret this as impolite. If you are not sure how to interpret it, just ask your host family or liaison person.

Honesty is valued very much in personal relationships. You may feel it is impolite to tell your host family that you don't like certain things or activities. Maybe in your culture it is more polite to avoid saying "No", especially to parents and older persons.

In BiH, people expect you to say what you want **directly**, even if you refuse something. If your host family and friends have the impression you are not saying what you really think, they could be disappointed.

In BiH, relationships between parents and children are mostly based on the **mutual trust**. If your host parents feel you are **responsible** enough, you might be allowed to take many decisions yourself; however, the parents have the last word. Maybe you are not used to always telling your natural family exactly where you are going and what you are doing in order to avoid conflicts. Parents in BiH expect to be informed and consulted – in return you will enjoy a lot of freedom. But if your host family feels you are not always telling them the **truth** about your activities, they will feel hurt and betrayed – this can lead to serious conflicts!



We love **discussions**, voicing our opinions and talking about them – which may seem like fighting to you. We can be pretty loud and you might hear us talking loud in the same time. It is just the way of communication and it doesn't mean that we are arguing.

Your host family and friends will ask for your opinion, too – feel free to say what you really think. You are not expected to agree with them, but please expect that others will question your way of seeing things too. You may feel uncomfortable during these discussions, but always remember: you are talking about ideas and opinions, not about personal relationships. People may disagree with your opinion on a certain issue, but still like you very much **as a person**. Wishes and criticism are uttered openly and very directly in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Though, be precautionary with subjects as politics since it can be sometimes tricky.

Please remember: When a family member asks you to change something you regularly do or expresses disapproval of what you did, they always **criticize** your **behavior**, they do not want to express that they dislike you personally! Instead, by frankly telling you their expectations and what disturbs them, they want to improve the relationship with you.

Certain **do's and don'ts** may be important to know, especially in the beginning of your stay, when you and your family don't know each other very well:

Ask before you use the **telephone and internet** and don't stay on both for too long. You must bear in mind that **telephone and internet charges may be fairly high in Bosnia and Herzegovina**. Be prepared that your host family can not cover this cost for you. Do not use the internet too often to mail your parents or your friends. This will interrupt your integration in your hosting place very much, and every hour spent in front of the computer is **one hour not spent** with your host family and friends. If you have problems, questions, please do not hesitate to contact your host family, liaison person or AFS in BiH. We are all here to help you! Ask before you **take food from the fridge**; it might be planned for something. **Say** "Hvala" and show your appreciation, say "Dobro jutro" in the morning after you got up and "Laku noć" when you go to bed.

If you have planned an **independent activity**, please tell your family in advance, so that they don't plan anything else for you. Tell them where you are going, with whom and when you will be back. They are responsible for you as if you were their own child. **AFS expects its participants to respect the rules of AFS and their host families** (curfew, common meals etc.), even if you are over 18 years.

Like children in BiH normally do, you will have to help doing the **chores** as well. Not just the girls but also the boys (hello boys!!!) are asked to help. Please show your respect by tidying your own room, helping set the table, washing the dishes or mowing the grass.

Especially the boys should keep in mind that not only your Bosnian host fathers will tell you what to do, but that the mothers play an equally important part in the families and have the same authority as their husbands.

For some of you, this might be difficult to understand or to accept. But it is a challenge for you at the same time, and being an AFS-student we think you are open minded enough for all cultural differences, willing to see, listen, learn and adjust. And if there are habits or rules or anything else in your family that you don't understand, do not hesitate to ask!



Explaining and **talking** is the best way to avoid misunderstandings and bad feelings throughout your whole exchange.

On the average, towns and cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina are **not very big**. Many families live in rural areas and commute to the city for work. Please **ask your host family** about possible activities in town and try and find a group where you can take part. Sports, music and similar activities are a good way to **meet people and make friends**.

Last but not least we would like to point out again that AFS host families all over the world host on a **voluntary basis**, without taking or getting any money for their **hospitality**. Please keep this in mind and appreciate what your family is doing for you!

5. Cuisine and Meals in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnian cuisine uses many spices, but usually in very small quantities. Most dishes are light, as they are cooked in lots of water with fully natural sauces. Bosnian food is closely related to Turkish, Greek, and other former Ottoman and Mediterranean cuisines.

Typical meat dishes include primarily beef and lamb. Some local specialties are *ćevapi* (photo 1), *burek* (photo 2), *dolma*, *sarma* (photo 3), *pilav*, *goulash*, *ajvar*. The most popular traditional sweets are *balkava* (photo 4), *hurmašice*, *tufahije*, and the most popular traditional drink is *Bosnian coffee* (photo 5).



Day starts with a more or less rich **breakfast**: e.g. bread with jam, cheese, cream or sausages with eggs. Also Corn Flakes or “Müsli” can be served. Adults mostly drink coffee or tea and young people often prefer white coffee, milk, tea, chocolate or juice.

Most families in BiH do not have **lunch** at home since parents work and children are at school around noon, so they eat outside of the house. This is however different during the weekends when you will have lunch at home. In most families red meat, poultry or fish with vegetables, potatoes, noodles or rice are regular features.

Dinner is usually served between 5 and 8 p.m. It is normally the biggest meal during the day and also consists of red meat, poultry or fish with vegetables, potatoes, noodles or rice.

Meals are not always served at regular hours and you should ask your host family how did they regulate meals in their house. Meals usually do not last long (about 1/2 or 3/4 of an hour). In Bosnia and Herzegovina we eat with knife, fork and spoon, though there are some meals which are or can be eaten with hands. If you are not sure how to eat, just watch what the other family members are doing.

Most families say “*Prijatno*” before they start eating. If you don't like eating or drinking one of your host family's dishes, don't be afraid to tell your family about it in a polite way, but **give everything a chance**.

6. School is "cool" !

Like your peers in BiH, you will have to go to school during your stay. This is the best way of getting involved with groups of youth in BiH, of learning about their everydaylife, their activities, their fun and sorrow. And this is a mandatory part of the AFS-program – even if you have finished secondary school at home.



AFS expects you to attend school on a regular daily basis. Please take school seriously. It is most likely that you will go to the GYMNASIUM (college prep school). AFS students are enrolled in 2nd, 3rd or 4th grade depending in their age. Being a guest you do not have the right (and AFS doesn't have it, either) to require an enrollment in a specific grade or even get credits from the host school. However, you will always receive certificates of attendance with marks you received during the school year.

Students usually go to school from Monday through Friday. In some schools, the classes are only in the morning, in the other classes are in the afternoon or one week in the morning and the other week in the afternoon. The class size varies between 20 to 30 students.

Subjects: Students visiting 1st or 2nd grade usually have the following subjects: Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian language and literature, 2 foreign languages, Math, Informatics, Sport, Psychology, Sociology, Music, Art, Geography, History, Chemistry, Biology and Physics

Students visiting 3rd or 4th grade can choose between 4 directions in the most of gymnasiums in BiH: 1.natural subjects: chemistry, biology and physics; 2.math-informatics: math, informatics and physics; 3.languages: English, German, French or Spanish, Latin; 4.social subjects: Geography, History and Sociology. The obligatory subjects for all directions in these two grades are: Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian language and literature, 2 foreign languages + Latin, Math, Sport, Psychology or Philosophy, Sociology, World religions.

School clubs and activities as music, sports, art, drama sections which students can attend outside of classes are mostly held on Saturdays. Apart from regular school life, many schools organize one-day or one-weekend school trips inside of BiH or to the neighboring countries. As an exchange student you have the option to participate in these trips, but you should be prepared to bring along sufficient funds for this trip, since it will not be refunded by AFS.

Your start at the school in BiH might not always be easy. Learning the language and trying to follow what is going on is quite a task in the beginning. Do not give up! If you don't lose your motivation and if you work regularly, you will certainly be successful very soon. And it will be appreciated, if you show interest and try to understand as much as you can.

7. Your exchange with AFS

Entering Bosnia and Herzegovina - your first day

Upon your arrival at the **Sarajevo International Airport** you will be met and welcomed by AFS volunteers. You will be either picked up by your host families at the airport or you will travel by bus with AFS volunteers to your host families. At your final destination, your host family will welcome you. In case your hosting family will not pick you up at the airport, it doesn't mean they want to be impolite. Some families do not have the possibility to pick you up at the airport, for example because of the distance or because they don't own a car. But do not worry: you will get a warm welcome at the bus station!

Due to domestic travel arrangements you are only allowed to carry one piece of luggage at 20 kg plus your hand-luggage.

By the way, Bosnian legislation obliges you to register your stay at the police office within 48 after your arrival. After registration, you will get so called "White carton" with which you can stay in BiH up to 90 days. Your visa (if you need one to enter BiH) generally expires after three months too. Please, contact Embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina in your country for more information about entering BiH.

Latest on the 75th day after your arrival to BiH, you will need to apply for temporarily residence permission. Don't worry, AFS office in BiH will guide you through it!

On-Arrival Camp

Upon your arrival you will participate in an On-arrival camp in Sarajevo, a "survival meeting". This is not about how to survive in an earthquake or how to find your way out of the jungle – it is about getting important information on local AFS-contact persons, the local AFS-chapter, the program, anything you need to know for a first support in case of an emergency, any problem - or just homesickness.

A few weeks later: Late-Orientation-Camp

Three weeks after your arrival in BiH, AFS will invite you to the Late-Orientation-Camp (LOC), where you will meet with other AFS students from different countries. You will spend about 2-3 days in the LOC. AFS-volunteers will give you further information about BiH - some more details about history, political structure, family life, leisure activities, school system and other useful things to know for your stay. They will also present and explain the AFS-participation rules, especially the travel rules which you have to follow during your stay. You will share your first experiences with other AFSers and you may ask the counselors for advice regarding any concerns, problems or questions.



Local Activities

All over the program there can be local activities offered by your local chapter. And perhaps you have the chance to participate in local social activities like some other project AFS in BiH does or to be invited as a guest to radio or tv station. But this will all depend on the activities in your local chapter.

Midterm-Camp

Midterm-Camp lasts 2-3 days and takes place in February. You will be invited to this meeting with other AFSers from your hosting area. During this meeting you have the chance to talk to other AFSers about your experiences of the last months and get some counseling, in case you need it. You will have the opportunity to participate in the Mini-stay during which you will spend one week in another host family in a different part of the country in order to learn more about Bosnia and Herzegovina and its culture.

End-Of-Stay / Evaluation

About 2-3 weeks before your departure you will be invited for an evaluation meeting. This meeting will prepare you for your re-entry into your home country and evaluate the past AFS experience.

Departure

At the end of your stay, just before your departure date, you will travel again to Sarajevo airport. If your flight is leaving early in the day, you will stay for one night in the Sarajevo area, accompanied by AFS volunteers.

8. AFS cares for you

There may be times, especially during the first weeks, when you feel **homesick** and miss your friends, your favorite food or the sunshine at home. Of course, there is no patent cure for homesickness. One thing that usually helps is to **talk** about it to your host parents or host siblings, to your AFS-counselor or a friend at school. If you simply close up in your room all day and don't speak to anybody, your host family may misunderstand your behavior: they might think that you don't like them, that you are not interested, motivated or what-so-ever. Nobody would blame you if you told them that you are homesick.

Everybody who has lived abroad for a while (e.g. your AFS counselor) understands your feelings and may be able to help you. The same applies for **any problem** you can't solve alone or if you are unhappy: just **talk** about it - to your **host family or AFS-counselor**. You feel at home where you have made **friends**, don't you? Once you have a close friend in BiH, you will feel "at home" over here. But friends don't come easily, and it may take a while to make really close friends. Don't give up straight away, just give yourself some time, because that is what it takes to become really good and close friends. If you have the feeling that your host family cannot help you with a specific problem, there is an AFS-volunteer just for you in your area, in the local AFS-chapter. He or she is always willing to listen and is interested in how you are!



Usually this **liaison-person** is only a bit older than you are and has been on the AFS program just a short time ago. In general, there are also adult volunteers in the chapter who are the liaisons for the host families. You will get to know your personal liaison as

soon as you come to your host community. She or he is always the first representative of AFS to contact if you have any problems or just simple questions.

If you can't reach your liaison, you may contact **the head of the local AFS chapter** or **the main AFS office**. All names and phone numbers and further specifics will be given to you upon arrival at your AFS host chapter.

9. Money makes the world go round

Spend your money carefully. Your host family takes care of your accommodation and food at their home. AFS covers all regular program activities costs (details see below).

For your personal needs you will have to bring **pocket money** of about 70,00 to 150,00KM per month. This is to cover personal expenses like postage, paper, mobile phone costs, birthday presents, cinema or theatre tickets, beauty articles etc. The mentioned amount isn't enough to make the world go around very fast. You will have to be thrifty and, probably, have to get along with less than you're used to. To receive your pocket money in BiH, it is possible to open a **bank account**.



After arriving in BiH ask your host family to help you with this so that you can forward your bank account to your natural family. Some banks do not offer this service though. In this case there are other possibilities can be arranged after arriving in BiH.

To get an idea how expensive BiH is, here is a list with examples. But keep in mind that this depends on the shops and cities you are shopping:

a Coke in a café: 3,50 KM
to see a film in cinema: 4,00-8,00KM
to take the public bus or tram: 1,50- 1,80KM
one CD: 10,00-50,00KM
one sandwich: 1,00-4,00KM

Your family hosts you on a voluntary basis and doesn't get any refunds for this from AFS. They open their home to you and thus might have quit some extra expenses because of you. Please bear this in mind when they ask you to pay for some smaller things (like toothpaste, shampoo or so). If you can get small **jobs** like mowing lawns, baby-sitting or tutoring someone in your native language, you can, of course, take these jobs. They should not, however, interfere with family activities and school. You cannot take up any regular jobs because you won't be able to get a work permit as an exchange student. If you work without a permit, you risk being extradited by the authorities.

You should bring some **extra money** with you to buy winter clothes (if you don't bring any) or to have some money to cover extra expenses.

You will also need money for the **residence permission**, which will cost between 100EUR and 150EUR (taxes + testing at the hospital).

AFS pays for...

- **transportation** to and from school. AFS will also pay for **school books** that you absolutely need, but which you can't get from your school for free. However, books AFS has paid for, have to be left in the local chapter when you return home, for future AFS-students.
- a short basic **language course** in your host community;
- **transportation to and from your host families** at the beginning and the end of your stay;
- travel costs, accommodation and food at **program activities** (On-Arrival, LOC, Midstay, End of Stay, Departure).

10. Take care! - Safety-Tips

You may think that a booklet giving some advises about your safety is not a very pleasant way to welcome people. Our purpose is certainly not to scare or alarm you. By giving you the following tips, we just want you to avoid any trouble or incident during your stay in Bosnia and Herzegovina and allow you to make the most of it.



In your country and in your cultural surroundings you have learned to avoid dangerous situations by instinctively following the rules you have been taught. These rules, which are often anchored in your subconscious, keep you safe. You know the places you better not go to, you notice as soon as someone makes a threatening impression (through their exterior, their behavior or the way they speak). These acquired instincts, which help to avoid danger, don't work for every country.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is generally a safe country. It can happen, however, that you get into an unpleasant or even dangerous situation and you may not know how to react according to our patterns of behavior. That is why we advise you to read these tips carefully and talk about the subjects with your host family, your contact person or the AFS office.

A. In and Around your Home

Within your Host Family

Although there are security instructions which are valid throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, there may be regional differences. Therefore we recommend that you talk about the following questions with your host family:

- *What should I do in case of an emergency? Whom should I call?*
- *Where do you keep the emergency phone numbers (family, doctors, relatives...)?*
- *Do you have a first aid equipment? Where is it?*

- *Do you have a fire extinguisher? Where is it?*
- *Do you always lock your windows and doors?*
- *Am I going to have a house key? What if I forgot it?*
- *How should I react if I am at home by myself and someone rings at the door?*
- *Do I answer the phone when I am on my own? Which information may I pass on to unknown persons when answering?*
- *Are there any dangerous household appliances (e.g. gas stove...)?*

Outside

During the day it is usually safe to go out by yourself. At night you should be more careful. In both cases we strongly advise you to follow your host family's instructions. Always let your host family know where you are going, with whom and when they should expect you back. Always leave a telephone number where you can be reached.

Talk about the following with your host family:

- *Is it safe to walk around the neighborhood by night?*
- *Which areas in my host community are not safe for me – at night/at daytime?*
- *How can I feel safe when alone, especially at night?*
- *What should I do if I get lost or separated from my friends?*
- *Is it safe to use public transport (bus, trolley bus, tram, train) at all times?*
- *What if an emergency occurs outside?*

Ask you host family about any situation in which you feel uncertain or frightened!

B. Protection of minor laws

If you want to go out with friends, please be aware of the protection of minors' laws:

- **Minors are not allowed to:**
 - Drink or purchase alcohol
 - Attend gambling halls
 - Be outside in the night between 23.00h-5.00h without a person who has a parental responsibility

All drugs (also light drugs such as marijuana, ecstasy-tablets) **are illegal in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Stay away from them!!!** If you get involved with any kind of drugs your stay in Bosnia and Herzegovina will be terminated immediately by AFS.

C. AFS Rules

In addition to these laws AFS in Bosnia and Herzegovina sets the following **rules**:

- Obeying family rules
- Regular school attendance
- Following the law
- No driving of motor-driven vehicles
- No pregnancy
- No hitch-hiking
- Obeying traveling rules

Breaking of any of these rules will lead to termination of your stay in Bosnia and Herzegovina!

D. Fare dodging

If you use public transportation, be sure to have a valid ticket. If you are owner of a monthly ticket check for which kind of transportation it may be used. The tickets for bus, tram or trolleybus generally have to be bought before starting the trip. They can be purchased either at the station, at the little shops at the station or by the driver inside of the vehicle. If you are unsure, ask someone.

Don't use public transportation without a valid ticket. If you get caught, you not only have to pay a service fee (30KM = c.a.15 EURO), but also a complaint may be filed.

E. Music download

It is illegal in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as in any other country, to offer or download copyrighted music or video files. Bosnian authorities are starting now to implement this law and prosecute violations, and it is hard to tell how it is going to work. For every case, we strongly recommend you to avoid purchasing pirate CDs and DVDs and to be careful what you are downloading and in which measure.

F. Uncomfortable Social Situations – Time to say no

Physical Issues

Especially during your first weeks in Bosnia and Herzegovina you might be unsure how to consider other persons behavior. A “brother kiss” for example is very normal in certain countries; it might not be in yours. In general in Bosnia and Herzegovina the form of reception and interaction depends a lot on the relation you have with that person. Relations are depending mostly on “knowing a person well” and not so much on the status that the person has compared to you. If you are in doubt, discuss this openly with your AFS counsellor, your host family and AFS-volunteers or staff members.

Be aware that sexuality may be shown very open in public in Bosnia and Herzegovina. E.g. Companies use erotic pictures to advertise their products. You will not only see them in magazines, but also displayed along the streets.

It is also quite common among young people to talk about sexuality. That does not mean that you are expected to join that conversation or even talk about your own experience. It is your right to refuse an answer, and no one will force you to.

Overall, you should not compromise your own personal values and beliefs regarding sexual behavior. **If you feel** you have been exposed to sexual harassment speak about it to your host family, AFS contact person or your AFS local chapter. You may also contact info-bih@afs.org or our SOS phone line for advice. You will also receive more information about this issue at your first orientation camp in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Peer pressure and Alcohol

If you go out with friends, especially if visiting bars or clubs, it may be common among your friends to consume alcohol. You will be probably offered some drinks as well. Be sure not to feel pressured to do anything you don't want to. You always have the right to decline the offer, and this will be fully accepted. It is accepted in Bosnia and Herzegovina though to consume alcohol within the legal limits as written above. Be aware that

Bosnian students might be used better to Alcohol than you are. If you choose to drink a beer or so, be careful with what you do. Especially don't go swimming after consuming alcohol! You might drown.

G. Diseases, Dangerous Animals and Mines

Bosnia and Herzegovina is one of the safe countries as for diseases and dangerous animals. But even if sexual diseases such as HIV are proportionally rare in Bosnia and Herzegovina, you should follow the well known rules of behavior. If you are uncertain, ask a person you trust in.

There are still wild animals like wolfs, bears, foxes, dears and boars to be found in the Bosnian mountains and woods. Though, you should not be afraid of them, since they do not have habit in going into the populated areas and they are controled by the hunting associations. However, during the warm summer days, you should avoid walking trough places with high grass, stones or similar places where dangerous snakes could be resting.

Mines are one of the consequences of the previous war in 90's. The current situation according to the BH MAC (www.bhmac.org) is:

- Total supect area currently covers around 1555 km² - or 3,04 % of total country size.
- Estimated number of mines and UXO = 220 000.
- *Bosnia and Herzegovina should be free of mines by 2019.*



The mine fields are to be find mostly in the mountain areas or not populated villages which were destroyed during the war. All mine fields are marked with yellow stripes and attention signs. You can ask your host family to tell you if there are any mine fields in your host community.

H. Cycling, Bathing, Risky Sports

Risky sports (e.g. climbing) are not permitted within the AFS program. You need a sports waiver signed by your natural parents for these activities. If you ride a bike, ask you host parents about dangerous crossings and the traffic rules for cyclists. Attention, we have right hand traffic in Bosnia and Herzegovina! Do not ride in the dark without lights. Lock your bike to prevent theft.

Do not go swimming if you do not feel safe – even if others want you to join them. Be careful when bathing in the lakes since they can be pretty deep, or in the rivers which can be also deep and potentially dangerous or in the sea (your host parents or natives will inform you about the dangers of the tide). If swimming in lakes or rivers, do not jump in even if you think it is deep enough.

I. General Safety Considerations

There are pickpockets, be most aware when shopping in crowds or driving in the public transportation. Even at school, thefts are possible, so take care of your money and

personal belongings. Also always carry an id-card with you and a copy of your passport as you might be asked to show your identification.

Natural disasters are very rare in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Occasionally floods occur along the main rivers, especially during spring time. Those floods usually don't come unexpected and therefore won't set you into a dangerous situation. You will be instructed how to behave well in advance by your host family or local authorities. Some regions are also experiencing minor earthquakes from time to time. These earthquakes are usually small so that you may not even notice them.

J. Emergency Phone Numbers

- General Emergency numbers:

Police:	122
Fire:	123
Ambulance:	124
General emergency number:	112

- AFS office number
+387 (0)33 974 606
- AFS emergency number:
+387 (0) 66 721 202

K. Travel rules

You may...

- travel with your host family or adult siblings of your host family during holidays,
- travel with your school class under the leadership of a teacher,
- travel with a sports team, choir, church group, etc., during holidays, if you are participating in the usual activities of this group
- visit adult friends or relatives alone during holidays, if they invite you and if your host family agrees.
- If you travel abroad your natural parents must agree to this trip as well (written agreement is requested). Trips which are planned longer than a weekend, can only be approved during vacation time.

During the first 4 months of your stay, no individual trips will be allowed.

You have to...

- notify your local AFS contact person **prior** to departure, and well in advance, about any travel that takes more than three days, mention dates and the address where you can be reached during your trip. AFS will not accept to be confronted with facts (reservations, bookings etc.).

You are not allowed to...

- travel by hitch-hiking, because it is considered dangerous in BiH.
- travel to your home country during the AFS-program.
- travel alone or only with people who are less than 18 years old. Single exceptions are the transfers between AFS meetings and host family, and the above mentioned visits to adult friends and relatives.
- travel with other AFS students when this group has no other purpose than this trip, even if they or you are over 18 years old.
- travel in a group with or without adults, when this group has no other purpose than this trip (e.g. group of AFS-students touring in BiH, bus-tours).
- travel at other times than holidays (exception, of course: travels with your school class).
- According to the participation agreement which you and your parents have signed, AFS discourages visits from relatives and friends during the program participation. No such visit may happen without prior approval of the AFS main office in Sarajevo.
- **In case of independent travel (for example without your host family or school) in order to avoid loss of money, you should make no reservation or booking prior to the consent of the main AFS office.**

Please keep in mind that AFS Program isn't a touristic sightseeing trip. We fully understand that you might want to see as much as you can of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but be aware that your host family and friends also don't travel every weekend. Disregard of the participation rules could result in the exclusion from the program and a return to your home country before the scheduled end of program!

Please keep in mind:

All rules are valid for every single AFS-participant, no matter what his/her age is or what he/she is individually allowed to do by his/her natural parents.

Same applies to driving: Even participants who have a driver's license must not drive during their stay on the AFS-program in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Please adhere to these rules. They are set for your safety. Bear in mind that AFS and your host family are responsible for you. Final decision to send a participant home due to failure to adhere to the rules and terms of participation is made by AFS Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, of course we hope that this will never be an issue for you and that you will enjoy your stay and your exchange in Bosnia and Herzegovina!

Conclusions

- 1. Get to know host culture well. Keep talking and discussing with your host family, peers, local AFS volunteers.**
- 2. Take concerns expressed by your host family or school seriously. Follow their advice.**
- 3. Do not ignore your own “instinct” in any given situation!**
- 4. Besides your host family, AFS provides you with local volunteers that are always happy to help you. Make sure you get to know your local AFS contact person. Take down her/his phone number and do not hesitate to call in case of any questions or concerns.**



11. Finally...

We hope this info will be enough to send your head reeling for a start! We have every confidence, although it might not be easy in the beginning, that you will not only be able to cope with "those strange Bosnian ways", but that you will learn to live with them, adopt some of them and have a marvelous time over here!

We are looking forward to having you here and want you to know that we are always there for you. And just think: even now, when you may be growing a little apprehensive about leaving home to go to a totally strange country to live with total strangers, these very strangers, your Bosnian family, are thinking of you, look forward to host you, making plans for you...

You will have a marvelous time!

See you soon and welcome!



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