

Ultimate Kid-friendly Itinerary for a Cruise Day in Kotor, Montenegro

Why The 2 Idiots recommend exploring Kotor?

We didn't have any expectations of Kotor; in fact, it was even on our radar. Our original cruise stop was supposed to be Istanbul, but we were rerouted due to security issues. Natasha didn't even know it existed and was wondering where we were going and if it would be any good after Mykonos and Santorini. But boy, were we blown away! It's stunning; old school medieval times – with cats (read on). Just pulling into port while on the Adriatic Sea, we were able to take in the most incredible scenery of the medieval city that is still surrounded by its original fortification walls as it was generations ago. The city only truly began seeing tourism in the 2000s, so its relatively undiscovered. Pictures don't even do it justice.

CREATING AN IDEAL ITINERARY

Kotor is a medieval city located in the small country of Montenegro. Our ship stopped in port from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., and with this much time you can easily enjoy the city by foot. Skip any expensive excursion offered and follow our recommended itinerary, just roaming around the medieval city. We got a later start, leaving the ship around 10 a.m. and returning around 4:30 p.m. to catch the tender, but didn't mind the shorter day because the views we caught from the ship of the Kotor and Montenegro were outstanding. The ships actually leave earlier and moves slowly so you can take in sunset views of Kotor – it makes Natasha happy just thinking about it.

Logistics

Kotor is intimate enough that you can do the entire port stop on foot. Be sure to have a good stroller with you, although the streets are often cobblestoned and it will be bumpy – wear good shoes! The port is not big enough to host a cruise ship, so you will need to tender to and from the port; be sure you find out when the last tender is leaving and plan to be there an hour before it departs, to give yourself time for any delays.

Itinerary	Estimated cost per person (only attractions)
<p>Explore the City Walls</p> <p>Optional: Visit the Castle of San Giovanni</p> <p>Get lost wandering around Old City, and visit St. Nicholas Church</p> <p>Chase the cats of Kotor</p> <p>Have lunch outside of the walls for the best food</p>	<p>All are free, with the exception of the castle, which is 8 Euros per person</p>

Visit the Tourist Sites

Kotor is an ancient city that began in the Roman times. Surrounded by walls and protected by a fortress since the Middle Ages, the city has its roots in the Byzantine era. Today, it is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, with 3 miles of its ancient walls stretching above the city. Head straight the walls to walk among them and see the city’s seaside views. If you would like to climb to the castle, you can hike to the top from May through September, but it is a difficult walk – 1,355 steps up a steep, rocky path. It will take 45 minutes just to walk up and down and is difficult with kids. We skipped it, but if you have the time, it is said the views are amazing. For this, we strongly recommend a baby carrier instead of a stroller if you have a child small enough to fit into a carrier.

During the change of power over Montenegro, Serbia took hold off Kotor in the late 1800s. To this date, the most important of the city’s orthodox churches is the Church of St. Nicholas, which replaced the original church that burnt down on Christmas Eve, hence its name. The narrow church was constructed in 1909. Stop at this church as you wander around old town, which can take about 45 minutes, with a small museum that gives the history.

Other sites around old town include the Church of St. Luke, the Cathedral of Saint Tryphon and the Church of St. Michael, each from the 12th century. Besides the churches are palace from ancient leaders, including Pima Palace and the oldest of palace’s, Drago Palace. You don’t need to visit them all, just catch views as you roam the pedestrian streets of Kotor, which is really the most fun part of exploring.

You could easily spend an entire day exploring the old city, and we recommend just spending your visit wandering and taking pictures. It was what we loved the best – we a couple of hours just walking around. It’s small enough that you won’t truly get lost.

Chase the Cats of Kotor

The Cats of Kotor cannot be missed, as the city is overrun with feral, yet friendly cats. They say the cats have become the symbol of the city. It is rumored the cats saved the city during the Austro-Hungarian War, and the locals welcome their population of cats. Your children will absolutely love chasing after cats and petting many of those who allow the touch of a child's hand. There is even a Cat Museum, with feline-themed artifacts, should you like to explore the cat-lore.

Leave the Walled City

When it comes to dining, it's best to leave the old city, as the restaurants are geared toward tourists and don't provide the best of the Montenegro. We tried a restaurant overlooking the Bay, Galion, which had both wonderful atmosphere and food to match, but it was a bit pricey, white tablecloth style, and they were not entirely happy with our son running around. Another option is quick eats and good BBQ at Tangja.

KID-FRIENDLY TIPS

- This is a walking day so you need to bring a [good stroller](#). There will be a lot of carrying strollers up and down stairs, so be prepared. If you can, let your child walk up the stairs while you carry the stroller.
- There are no cars allowed inside the old city, so your kids can run around and burn off energy.
- The day will be super-hot if you are visiting in the summer. Be sure to have sunscreen, hats and plenty of water.

OTHER TIPS

- Don't take an excursion or cruise shuttles, you can do this day on your own. Read [How to Do a Cruise Excursion on Your Own](#).
- A good data plan is critical for a visit to Kotor, as you'll be doing a lot of walking around narrow, and hard-to-find streets. With a [good data plan](#), make use of Google Maps, although for a moment, we literally stopped looking at our maps and got lost on purpose. It was so much fun because we got to see stuff most people don't when they visit. And, when we were ready to be found again, we just turned the Maps back on.
- It will be a great Instagram-photo-op day, so wear bright clothing to pop in your photos.
- Don't miss the departure views. As your ship pulls away, you'll see wonderful views you won't forget as you leave this charming part of the world.