

1.0 General Information

Position in the World

The country that I will be describing for this particular task will be Bosnia and Herzegovina. Bosnia is located in Southeastern Europe, bordering the Adriatic Sea and Croatia. The exact coordinates are 44 00 N, 18 00 E. Bosnia's total area is about 51,129 sq km which is about slightly smaller than West Virginia.

Country Data

A) Population

Bosnian population has a current low of 3,964,388 (July 2002 est.) because of the ethnic cleansing and war (1992-1996).

B) Gross National Product

The Gross National Product of Bosnia was measured back in 1990 and it was USD \$10,667,000,000. Public Dept was not available.

Exports ranged from 23,271,000,000 to 23,300,000,000 and imports were at a steady 21,130,000,000.

C) Major Products

Bosnia has many productions that include the following: steel, coal, iron ore, lead, zinc, manganese, bauxite, vehicle assembly, textiles, tobacco products, wooden furniture, tank and aircraft assembly, domestic appliances, and oil refining.

D) Form Of Government

Bosnia's government is the Emerging Federal Democratic Republic and the capital of Bosnia is Sarajevo.

E) National Language

Languages spoken in Bosnia include Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian.

F) Language Variety spoken by the people you will meet

Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian are all the same with minor accented words and imperfections. The languages are as similar as "US California" English to "US Boston" English. There are only minor variations.

G) Literacy Rate

The adult literacy rate % is 94.1% for males and 78.0% for women. The schools include a mandatory 8 years of primary school, 4 years in secondary school, and 4 years in universities and academies.



H) Major race, ethnic and religious groups

The Serb 37.1%, Bosniak 48%, Croat 14.3%, other 0.5% (2000)

The term “Bosniak” has replaced Muslim as an ethnic term in part to avoid confusion with the religious term Muslim - an adherent of Islam.

The religions include Muslim 40%, Orthodox 31%, Roman Catholic 15%, Protestant 4%, and other 10%.

I) Strategic interest in Bosnia

According to Secretary of Defense William J. Perry and his speech that was delivered on June 7, 1995 claims, “We do have a security interest in preventing the violence from spreading and from stimulating a broader European war. We do have a security interest in limiting the violence and the flow of refugees”. The US had some interests but no real vital national security interests in Bosnia.

2.0 Cultural Patterns

Belief System

The people of Bosnia before and after the ethnic war have been sort of laid back relaxed and without the day-to-day troubles that an US American would experience throughout his day. I have heard and read numerous statements before the ethnic war that said, “No where in the world, do you work less and earn as much as in Bosnia”. These statements are true. As I visited Bosnia in the summer of 2002, I noticed that people were not affected by the war at all but that they were strengthened and still believed that taking it day by day is necessary in order to feel alive. Bosnians have standard beliefs that revolve a lot around religion. They have a word called the “grehota” which basically means if you do something that makes somebody else happy, you in return will achieve happiness too because of God. There is definitely a religion based belief system in Bosnia.

Value System

Bosnians tend to value well being and “living” more than anybody I have ever seen. If a job is too hard, a Bosnian will first consider the effects of the job on him and his family and then take it if it suits his needs. Also, when I visited Bosnia last summer of '02, I have never seen people that love to eat as much as they do. No matter if it is breakfast or lunch, it has to look good, smell good, taste good, and be available in numerous quantities. They value family over anything and will go to any depths in order to make their families happy, even if it means sacrificing their well-being.

Norms

Being that Bosnians focus a lot on well being, they in also have and expect friendly characteristics from anybody they see and meet. People of Bosnia and especially kids are raised to be somewhat individual but are mostly raised to trust and rely on friendship. “Friendship is easily achieved but once it is achieved it is easily lost” –one term that I caught while talking to a guy my age during my visit in Bosnia.

Appropriate behavior is expected during throughout the day for all, no matter if it is a 30-year-old man or a 10-year-old child. In both situations behaviors have to be at it's best but during family gatherings, respect to the elderly is always show and their privacy or "bubble" is never invaded, only respected. Although people have to be at their best behavior most of the time, goofiness and acting in a humorous way is usually done around teenage friends and with relatives but even then, respect is shown.

3.0 Cultural Patterns

- 3.1** Activity Orientation in Bosnia is very low due to the ethnic war that lasted from '92-'96. Social Relations Orientations are very high and respected due to the fact that Bosnians fit more into the collectivism dimension. Self-Orientations just like everywhere exist but are not encouraged due to the low Individualism rate. World Orientation is not a priority due to the lack of stability in Bosnia and it's slow recovery rate.
- 3.2** Bosnia is a very high context culture. The culture revolves around a lot of overt messages, which are easily caught and understood because they are really "loud". Bosnia definitely has more in-groups because of the lack of economic status.
- 3.3** Power distances in Bosnia are only shown towards the elderly and respected characters such as leaders, teachers, etc. Uncertainty avoidance is rare in Bosnia due to the fact that it is a very small country and avoidance is not necessary because the majority of people are already aware of who who is. Bosnia's Individualism-Collectivism rate scores at a low -32 while Masculinity-Femininity scores at a high of 88.

4.0 Verbal Code

- 4.1** Being that Bosnia was part of Yugoslavia before 1992 and the ethnic war, most of the Bosnians still speak and understand Croatian and Serbian. In fact, just like I mentioned before, Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian are alike in a lot of ways and can be understood by a Bosnian without a problem. The national language of Bosnia is still Bosnian and it is not considered a tone language.
(4.4)
- 4.2** A sample of the written language.. "sta" is pronounced "shta" and means what. Bosnians use more letters than the US alphabet and those letters are s, z, c, c ,dz.
- 4.3** The language is based on the Western Varian of the Shtokavian dialect and uses both Latin and Cyrillic alphabet. It is used throughout the whole country even though before the war, communism played a big deal on Bosnia and it required all people and citizens of ex. Yugoslavia to learn Russian Cyrillic.

The characters are written from left to right and use the same rules that apply to the US alphabet system.

5.0 Nonverbal Code

- 5.1 Bosnian culture, just like Italian culture, uses a lot of hand movements and a lot of body language. Tourists should anticipate a lot of touch and voice interactions in order for the speaker (Bosnian) to prove his or her point. Bosnians tend to use a calming conversation voice, which can quickly turn into an aggressive tone when a point of passion and interest has been hit.
- 5.2 One can expect every citizen of Bosnia to use nonverbal communication. High-educated citizens tend to not use as much body language as the lower class citizens.
- 5.3 Being that Bosnians are really friendly people, the majority of the citizens that live in Bosnia do not hide their facial expressions. In fact, some of the people encourage it because it is a sign of friendliness and effort towards the speaker or listener.
- 5.4 **Space** – be ready to have it invaded. Not because people want to start arguments but only because everybody is expected to be friendly and there are no such things such as “personal bubbles”.
- Touch** – expect to be touched a lot. Not only because people need that certain touch to feel like they are important, but people will walk up to you, touch you and greet you with a lot of hugging and hand shaking.
- Time** – time is not of the priority. Even though people have places to be and things to do, they tend to be relaxed when it comes to time. Certain dates and times are obeyed like, personal dates, dinners, appointments while certain ones are not.
- Voice** – the volume of the voice depends upon the conversation. Sometimes people will talk quietly and calming when just randomly talking but once a sensitive and passionate subject has been achieved, people will raise voices to prove their points. Shouting and yelling is common.
- Silence** – silence, just like in every culture is considered “golden”. Even though in Bosnia, sometimes a quiet person will be asked, “hey, why are you so quiet?” His space will be invaded so that the questioner can see what is going on.
- 5.5 There are numerous gestures in the Bosnian culture that are appropriate for males and some that are not appropriate for females. For example, whistling for a guy is considered normal because the males, are simply calling each other. If a guy whistles at a female, then it is considered impolite because he is hinting at something.
- Another great example is the eyewink. It can mean several things in Bosnian culture. 1. Eye winking from a guy to a guy means, “good job” “I’m just kidding” “hinting at something”. 2. Eye winking to a woman is impolite in a

sexual way because it means “are you ready to get out of here” “do you want what I want?”

6.0 Typifications

The socio-economic status of my hosts at this point of time is ranked at a middle class level. The ethnic war had a big effect on every class so there is not a big number of upper class status.

The level of power in Bosnia is definitely ranked by class just like anywhere else, but in this case it stays forever. For example, a person famous 20 years ago, will still be considered famous and be loved. The social privileges after the ethnic war do not have any barriers in preventing one from doing what he/she wants to do.

The education level of my hosts is extremely high. The Bosnian education system is much more complex than the education system in the US. Kids in the first grade are expected to be adding/subtracting, multiplying/dividing and reading, writing, and speaking in an educated manner. Every host is highly educated in the fields of math, history and writing/reading.

The typical family of my hosts will consist of a husband and a wife and 1-2 kids and 3 maximum. They would have to be middle aged with usually 1 grandparent remaining and kids about 3-5 years apart.

The religion of Bosnian hosts is 98% Islamic. This term has been changed to Bosniak in order to avoid confusion with the Middle Eastern Muslim.

Every host plays a big role in society because society depends on the host. By this I mean is that, Bosnia is not yet stable as far as jobs and financial abilities so the society NEEDS the worker and depends on him. They do not have jobs such as outdoor activities yet because of the war, so every host that is employed or giving favors to his/her organization plays a big role within society because HE/SHE is important.

7.0 Interpersonal Relationships

7.1 Bosnian people are very friendly and welcoming people. They interact with strangers and foreigners the same way they do with their friends. When I visited Bosnia, even though I did not know many people, I was immediately accepted into the family as if I was a long lost friend. They are very friendly and will treat and act as if the stranger or foreigner is a friend that they have known for years.

Hugs and touch in general is important for the typical Bosnian. It shows them that you as a foreigner or stranger are in fact anxious to meet them and that you are pleased in return. Co-workers usually are very close friends that see each other regularly outside of work and their families know each other well.

The women in Bosnia have as much power as men. They are highly respected at home and in the workforce. They are not simply regarded as the “mother of my children” but they impact the society in many ways by providing high position services.

Friends are very important to a Bosnian and to the whole culture. They value friendship very high, even higher than riches. Friends in Bosnia usually act like they are brothers or relatives. They do not care what belongs to them because it belongs to the other person as well. Friends are irreplaceable in a Bosnian’s life.

7.2 Gift giving and receiving is only done at special occasions such as birthdays, holidays, etc. Co-workers rarely give or receive gifts from other workers. At a special multinational project dining and drinking is sometimes the case, formal dinners of course. Being that women are at the same standard as men, they are included in the dinner and their opinion and presence does matter and contribute. Bosnians usually like reciprocal conversations in which they engage in conversations about relatives or friends. This helps break the ice, which in return leads to better business deals and respect.

8.0 What is Taboo?

Bosnia, like the United States, has taboo behaviors and gestures that are very much alike. Impolite and childish behavior is usually a no-no with people that they meet for the first time. Close friends do act foolish from time to time but with respectable limits. Foul language and slang is never really a way to get to know the hosts even though it is used throughout Bosnia. There are numerous gestures such as the middle finger, or the whatever hand movement. Men are required to have full respect for women in Bosnia. Unacceptable behavior such as whistling as a woman walks by, talking behind somebody’s back, or simply provoking somebody is taboo in Bosnia. The same rules apply to women. In a nutshell, Bosnia is very similar if not the same as the US when it comes to what’s taboo and what’s not.

9.0 Stereotypes

Bosnians rarely stereotype because Bosnia does not have a multicultural like the US. Bosnia is predominantly all white, there is no black, Hispanic or Asian person living in Bosnia. So they do not have the developed hate against them because nobody ever interacted with any other culture other than white European and they never had any reason to hate any black or Hispanic person. They do watch the news and they develop their own definitions of people outside of Bosnia. They do on the other hand, notice how President Bush was elected and they start to question US rational thinking and its intellectuality. They have nothing against US Americans because after all, it is the United States that stopped the war after a gruesome 4-year tragedy.

10. Additional Information

Bosnia is a great country not only because of its very historical location, but also because of its beautiful beaches and tourist locations. It has great history behind it such as the assassination of the Austrian archduke FRANZ FERDINAND in Sarajevo, which the capital of Bosnia in June 1914. The resulting conflict between Serbia and Austria-Hungary quickly escalated into World War 1. Another great history moment is that Bosnia was the host of the Olympic games in 1984

The names Bosnia and Herzegovina refer to two separate regions: Bosnia (its name derived from the Bosna River) occupies the great majority of the republic's territory; Herzegovina is a much smaller area in the south, around the city of Mostar; its name derives from the German Herzog ("duke"), the title borne by its former rulers.