

AZEVEDO WATER POLO MONTENEGRO TRIP FAQs (FOR PARENTS AND ATHLETES)

What is included in the price of the trip?

- pick up/drop off from the airport of arrival/departure
- comfortable accommodation and three meals per day
- transportation to/from the water polo trainings every day
- two trainings per day (games and scrimmages will be arranged when possible but are not guaranteed)

Who will be the main points of contact once in Montenegro?

Damir Matanovic, Professional Water Polo Coach +382 675 70593

Marijana Milovic, Coach Damir's wife: +382 674 16495

**Please note that once you have arrived in Montenegro, Sara and Tony will still be available to help out or counsel via email or Skype, but all local questions and concerns should be sent directly to Damir or Marijana. Coach Damir is also available via email, Skype or WhatsApp 24/7 (matapolo10@gmail.com, +1 716 392 1556 - USA; +382 675 70593- Montenegro).*

What is Montenegro like?

Montenegro was part of former Yugoslavia and gained independence in 2006. It is a stunningly beautiful place—black mountains rise dramatically into a bright blue sky and miles of lush coast run along the glimmering Adriatic Sea. Because of all it has to offer, Montenegro is a popular tourist destination, but is it still relatively undiscovered, at least compared to Croatia to the north. It is the perfect place for outdoor activities—biking, hiking and of course, playing water polo in the sea. The food is simple and fresh, centering on meat and fish, paired with vegetables and potatoes. Wine, olives (and amazing olive oil), and homemade cheese are also abundant. People are relatively very friendly, and most everyone speaks English. It's also very safe-- people are still accustomed to leaving doors unlocked and there is very little crime. But of course, just as in any tourist destination, keep a close eye on wallets, phones etc.





What will the weather be like?

Montenegro boasts a balmy summer and a mild winter. July and August are the hottest months, with temps often reaching into the 90's and above. Quick and forceful thunderstorms are also common in the summer, leaving everything feeling fresh. Spring and fall are comfortable and usually in the 70's, while winters can get cold but are usually just very rainy. June should be warm but comfortable.

Is water polo popular in Montenegro?

Water Polo is the national sport of Montenegro and a very popular pastime. Montenegrin players grow up by the sea and start playing water polo as early as five years old. During the summer, water polo courses are set up directly in the Adriatic Sea, and are used for professional games as well as amateur fun. Most everyone knows a lot and genuinely understands the game as well. When the National Team is playing, the entire country celebrates—and even just throughout the year bars are constantly playing live games. Summer is also a great time to visit for water polo because it's when the Championship games are held. Then the professional league begins in September and goes through June. Montenegro is home to five clubs, all of them very strong and consisting of water polo schools for all age groups. The VK Primorac team, based in Kotor (where the athletes will train), has a loyal following of fans called the 'Bestie'. Primorac's biggest opponent and rivalry is with Jadran (Herceg Novi) and beating them is really a big deal. Primorac takes part in the Montenegrin Water Polo Cup and the Adriatic Water Polo League, two of the strongest tournaments in the world. In 2009, Primorac won the European League by defeating Pro Recco, and in 2010 they reached the finals but ended up losing to Recco (the year Tony played for them). Montenegrin youth teams are very good and the water polo program in Montenegro is considered one of the best in Europe. Basically each city lives for victory and the gold medal, so Montenegrins can't imagine life without the sea and water polo. For athletes who love the sport, this is one of the best places in the world to be!

What language is spoken?

The local language is Montenegrin, but this is essentially the same language as Serbian, Bosnian and Croatian (think about the difference between American, British and Australian English). If you are looking to translate anything prior to the trip you can use Google Translate or another application and choose 'Croatian' or 'Serbian'.

What currency is used?

Montenegro currently uses the Euro, although it is not yet part of the European Union. Its neighbor to the north, Croatia, entered the EU in July 2013, so the Euro is now valid throughout the region.

Where will my athlete be staying?

Individual athletes stay with **Coach Damir** and his wife, **Marijana**, at their apartment in Tivat. Damir and Marijana are good friends with Tony and Sara and are well-known figures within the local community.

Their apartment is brand new and very comfortable -- your athlete will have his/her own room, wifi, cable tv/dvd and air conditioning. Your athlete will spend the day with Marijana (who will act as a chaperone) and with the coach and players from the local team. They will show your athlete around town, teach him/her a little history, provide free tickets for pro water polo games, take him/her to the beach and generally take very good care of them! Coach Damir's parents live directly within the Kotor Old Town walls, where Marijana and your athlete will also be able to spend time on the weekends.

What will the food/meals be like?

Your athlete will eat all meals with Damir and Marijana or Coach Damir's family at their homes. He and Marijana eat very healthy and prepare fresh food featuring meat, vegetables, fish, pasta, fruit, soup, salads and other national specialties like squid, cheese, prosciutto, steaks and desserts. Your athlete can also feel free to make specific requests, which they will do their best to accommodate. On the weekends, Coach Damir's parents will cook up some delicious old-school Montenegrin meals! If your athlete is hungry at other times of day there are several options: 1st: ordering from outside delivery services (pizza is popular); 2nd: going to a nearby grocery store. Please note that your athlete must pay for any food ordered beyond the three standard meals provided each day.

Where will my athlete train and with whom?

During the summer months, trainings are usually held directly in the Adriatic Sea at set courses. At other times throughout the year, trainings will be held at the VK Primorac pool, located in Kotor. Depending on your athlete's age and level, Coach Damir will place him/her with one of the local teams that he used to coach. They will also have the opportunity for extra work (1 – 1 sessions) or individual workouts. Whatever the local team does, your athlete will participate and do the same thing (passing, shooting, defensive and offensive drills, conditioning, weight room etc). Coach Damir also works hard to arrange games against various local or visiting clubs, giving your athlete the opportunity to train and play at the highest level and to become fully immersed in water polo.

Will Tony Azevedo personally be there during the dates that my athlete will be training in Montenegro?

No, unfortunately not. Sara and Tony lived in Montenegro for three years when Tony played for the Primorac team. They are good friends of Coach Damir's and are very familiar with the region and the water polo scene. They currently live in Sao Paulo, Brazil, but are always available to chat via email or Skype.

Who is responsible for meeting my athlete and taking care of details along the way?

Coach Damir and Marijana are in charge of making sure your group is safely transported to and from the airport, and also to and from trainings each day. Coach Damir worked as the Montenegrin Senior Club Assistant Coach until he took a job with a highly regarded professional women's team in Chengdu, China. Before that he worked as the Montenegrin Junior National Team Coach (2009-11) and coached several professional clubs including VK Primorac (2004-06), the Becej Club (2006), VK Budva (2007) and VK Pittsburgh USA (2007- 2009). Damir himself was a water polo player for VK Primorac from 1993 until 2003, when he decided to study at the sports academy in Belgrade and obtain a license as a professional coach. Coach Damir is currently living in Texas where he is the coach of the Pegasus Water Polo Academy. He will return to Montenegro in the summers to run AWP trips.

What type of transportation will be provided from the airport to the hotel?

Damir and Marijana will personally arrange to pick your athlete up from the airport, and drop him/her off when it's time to leave. Your athlete will also ride with the local coach and/or players to and from trainings each day. For organized outings, they use a company called Tivat Travel, owned by Milos Zivaljevic, a life-long friend of theirs. They primarily use Mercedes vans and cars. All vehicles are equipped with air conditioning and a friendly and knowledgeable driver!

What type of transportation will be best for my athlete to use on his/her own?

Taxis are the best way to get around in Kotor and Tivat, as they are cheap, easy and safe (make sure to carry small change in Euros). If your athlete is interested in venturing to nearby cities on his/her own, there is also a good bus system, with the station located in Kotor near the Primorac pool.

Where is the nearest medical center and or hospital?

The Health Hospital of Tivat is located two minutes from Coach Damir and Marijana's apartment and in close proximity of all trainings and outings. The hospital's address is Park bb and phone number is [+38232671129](tel:+38232671129). In case of an emergency, Marijana will accompany your athlete and take care of everything.

If my athlete wants to do some sightseeing or non- water polo activities, what are the options?

Azevedo Water Polo does not organize outings or sightseeing as part of our package, but we can give you suggestions on what to do. Marijana is then available to help you make all the arrangements prior to your trip or once you arrive. For half days, we suggest day tours of Kotor or Budva (both walled castle cities on the sea). For full days, our favorite idea is to rent a boat (that can hold the whole team and staff) to sail around the Kotor Bay and the Adriatic Sea. You can stop on Mamula Island to tour the old World War II prison, cliff jump into the blue cave, and pause for lunch in hidden coves along the way. Groups have enjoyed this in the past as a team-building and bonding activity. Marijana can also help you set up team lunches or dinners and local restaurants. For more specifics you can also check out Sara Azevedo's blog at <http://saraazevedo.wordpress.com/> (there are several posts about Montenegro from when she and Tony lived there).

Are there suggested gifts for the coaching staff or local athletes?

Gifts are definitely not necessary, but if you choose to bring something, USA gear or other surfing or typically American items are popular, as well as USA water polo balls. Shirts or clothes that say "California" or other similar ideas can be fun.



A few other things to keep in mind:

- **Passports:** Be sure to obtain or update your athlete's passport ahead of time, as this can definitely be a process (passports must be valid for at least six months after the date of the trip). Be sure to fill out the Emergency Contact information portion on page four. It is also a good idea for another family member to have a valid passport, just in case of an emergency...or in case you decide to take that last minute jaunt over to Montenegro to meet up with your athlete!
- **Travel Insurance:** Please note that Azevedo Water Polo training trips do not include travel insurance. If you are interested, Travel Guard offers a Gold Level insurance package for around \$118.00 (as of February 2014). They also offer a Platinum Level insurance package for \$174.00. *Any pre-existing conditions require you to get the travel insurance 15 days after your 1st deposit is made.
- **Healthcare:** Be sure to check your current policy and coverage to make sure that your athlete will be adequately covered overseas. Also be sure that your athlete has all of his/her current vaccinations, tetanus shot and flu shot if desired.
- **Prescriptions and Medications:** Be sure to refill all necessary medications or prescriptions your athlete takes on a regular basis.
- **Cell Phones:** Check with your cellular carrier regarding International phone usage and packages. Another idea is to have your athlete purchase a cheap local phone and SIM card once he/she arrives (Marijana can help him/her with this).
- **Banking:** Be sure to alert your bank of your athlete's travel plans so that no bankcard is denied once overseas. We also recommend getting a credit card or ATM/Debit card in your athlete's name. Before leaving, ask your bank to exchange some US dollars for Euro --200 Euro should be plenty.
- **Document copies:** Please make a copy of the following: Passport, Medical Card & or Policy, Drivers License (if applicable) and Letter of permission to seek medical care in the event of an emergency. It's a good idea for your athlete to bring these documents along on the trip.