**SERBIAN SOCIAL SERVICES AND SUPPORT INC.**

**SERBIAN CULTURAL PROFILE:**

**HOW TO WORK WITH OLDER PEOPLE FROM SERBIAN BACKGROUND**

**UPDATED VERSION**

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# People and History

The first [Serbian Kingdom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serbian_Kingdom) was created in 1170 A.D. by Stefan Nemanja, the founder of the [Nemanjic dynasty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nemanji%C4%87), whose son was canonized as St. Sava and became the patron saint of the autocephalous Serbian Orthodox Church founded in 1219. Serbia’s territories expanded under the rule of King Milutin, who seized territory in nearby Macedonia from the Byzantines, and reached their peak under Milutin’s son, Stefan Dusan (1331-55). However, Serbian power waned after Stefan’s death in 1355 and at the battle of Kosovo (June 28, 1389) the Serbs were defeated by the Turks. Following the Battle of Smederevo in 1459, the Ottoman Empire exerted complete control over all Serb lands.

Serbs lived under the rule of the Ottoman sultans for nearly 370 years, though the Serbian Orthodox Church, with several disruptions, transmitted Serbian heritage and helped preserve Serbian identity during this period. Movements for Serbian independence began with uprisings led by Karadjordje Petrovic (1804-13) and Milos Obrenovic (1815-17), founders of two rival dynasties that would rule Serbia until World War I. Serbia became an internationally recognized principality under Turkish suzerainty and Russian protection after the Russo-[Turkish War of 1828-1829](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russo-Turkish_War_(1828%E2%80%931829)). After waging war against Turkey in support of Bosnia rebels in 1876, Serbia formally gained independence in 1878 at the Congress of Berlin, largely thanks to Russian support. Following Austria-Hungary’s annexation of Bosnia, Serbia led a successful coalition of Montenegrin, Bulgarian, and Greek troops (the [Balkan League](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balkan_League)) that in 1913 seized remaining Ottoman-controlled territory in Europe and established Serbia as a regional military leader.

# Serbian Culture

The Serbian culture starts with that of the South Slavic peoples that lived in the [Balkans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balkans). Early on, Serbs may have been influenced by the Paleo-Balkan peoples. The [Byzantine Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byzantine_Empire) had a great influence of the culture; Serbs were initially governing the Byzantine frontiers in the name of the Emperor and were later through their sworn alliance given independence, baptized by Greek missionaries and adopted the [Cyrillic alphabet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serbian_Cyrillic_alphabet). The [Serbian Orthodox Church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serbian_Orthodox_Church) gained independence from [Constantinople](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constantinople) in 1219. The [Republic of Venice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic_of_Venice) influenced the maritime regions in the [Middle Ages](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_Ages). The [Ottoman Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ottoman_Empire) conquered Serbia in 1459 which lasted four centuries, consequences of which suppressed Serbian culture but also influenced greatly in arts. The culture flourished from 1718 in parts under the [Habsburg Monarchy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Habsburg_Monarchy).Following autonomy after the [Serbian revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serbian_revolution) and eventual independence, the culture of Serbia could be re-strengthened within its peoples. [Socialist realism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socialist_realism) was predominant in official art during the [Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socialist_Federal_Republic_of_Yugoslavia) but recent decades have seen a growing influence from Western and traditional Serbian art.

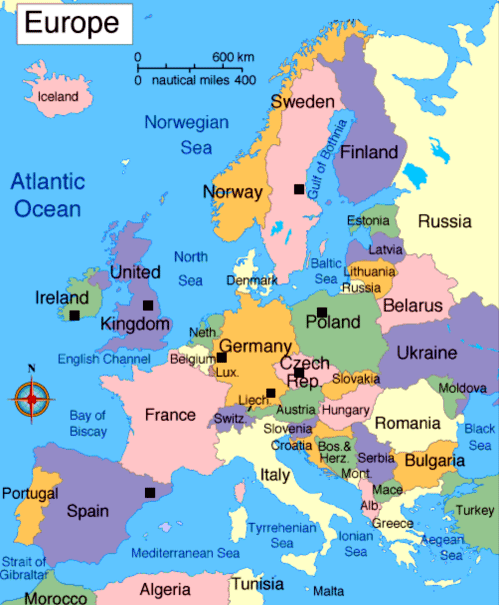
# Religion

Conversion of the [South Slavs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Slavs) from paganism to Christianity began in the early 7th century, long before the [Great Schism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Schism), the split between the [Greek Orthodox East](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Orthodox_Church) and the [Roman Catholic West](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Church), the Serbs were first Christianized during the reign of Heraclius (610-641) but were fully Christianized by Byzantine Christian Missionaries (Saints) [Cyril and Methodius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyril_and_Methodius) in 869 during [Basil I](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basil_I), who sent them after [Knez Mutimir](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knez_Mutimir), had acknowledged the suzerainty of the Byzantine Empire. After the Schism, those who lived under the Byzantine sphere of influence became Orthodox and those who lived under the Roman sphere of influence became Catholic. Later, with the arrival of the Ottoman Empire, many Serbs were converted into [Islam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam), today members of the [Gorani](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gorani) and [Bosniaks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bosniaks) (Muslims by nationality).

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# [Map of Serbia](http://www.google.com.au/imgres?imgurl=http://marvaoguide.com/images/stories/maps/serbia-map.gif&imgrefurl=http://marvaoguide.com/index.php/Countries/Serbia.html&h=352&w=328&sz=17&tbnid=xk5UiSXQVgPgFM:&tbnh=120&tbnw=112&prev=/search%3Fq%3Dmap%2Bof%2Bserbia)

Map of Europe



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# Cuisine

Traditional Serbian cuisine is varied and can be said is influenced by the [cuisine of the Mediterranean](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuisine_of_the_Mediterranean) ([Byzantine Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byzantine_Empire)/[Greece](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greece)), [Oriental](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oriental) ([Turkish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkish_cuisine)) and Austro-[Hungarian cuisine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hungarian_cuisine).

It has unique mix of various traditions; Serbian [confectioneries](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confectionery) often offer [koljivo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Koljivo), [baklava](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baklava), [nut roll](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nut_roll) and [sachertorte](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sachertorte). In recent times the [Serbian Diaspora](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serbian_diaspora) has spread the cuisine across the world.

Most people in Serbia will have three meals daily, [breakfast](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Breakfast), [lunch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lunch) and [dinner](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dinner), with lunch being the largest in the Mediterranean fashion. However, traditionally, only lunch and dinner existed, with breakfast being introduced in the second half of the 19th century.

A number of foods which are simply bought in the West, are often made at home in Serbia. These include [rakija](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rakija) (fruit brandy), [slatko](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slatko), [jam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jam), [jelly](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gelatin_dessert), various [pickled foods](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pickling), notably [sauerkraut](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sauerkraut), [ajvar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ajvar) and even [sausages](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sausage). The reasons for this range from economical to cultural. Food preparation is a strong part of the Serbian family tradition.

Serbian cuisine is generally rich in spices and herbs: like [black pepper](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_pepper) and white pepper, [allspice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allspice), [Coriandrum sativum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coriandrum_sativum), ground paprika, [parsley](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parsley), [laurel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bay_Laurel), [celery](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Celery), [clove](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clove) and lots of other are used in various meals and soups.

**Breakfast**

Breakfast in Serbia is an early but hearty meal, although before breakfast most people usually take a cup of [coffee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkish_coffee), in modern times maybe an [espresso](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Espresso). With the breakfast itself either a tea, milk, [milk coffee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milk_coffee), or [cocoa milk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chocolate_milk) is served, pastries or bread are served with butter, jam, yogurt, sour cream and cheese, accompanied by bacon, sausages, salami, scrambled eggs and kajmak.

* Various sorts of (often with cheese, meat, jam filled) pastries([*pogačice*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poga%C4%8Da), [*paštete*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turnover_(food)), [*kifle*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kifli) that in Serbian usage may or may not be crescent shaped and may be sweet, but, may also be sprinkled with salt crystals, [*kiflice*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Croissant), [*perece*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pretzel), [*buhtle*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buchteln), [*pletenice*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/V%C3%A1no%C4%8Dka), [*štapići*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Breadstick), [*zemičke*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaiser_roll), [*djevreci*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Djevrek)) and especially often:-
* [Burek](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burek) - a type of pastry
* [Kačamak](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kacamak) (also Cicvara) - a type of [polenta](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polenta)
* [Popara](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Popara) (bread mash)
* [Proja](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proja) (cornbread)
* [Eggs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egg_(food))
  + Kajgana ([scrambled eggs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scrambled_eggs))
  + Jaje na oko ([fried eggs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fried_eggs))
  + Rovito jaje ([soft-boiled egg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soft-boiled_egg))
  + Kuvano jaje ([hard-boiled egg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hard-boiled_egg))
  + [Bread](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bread) with something:-
  + Bread, (often [butter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Butter)) and [honey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Honey)
  + Bread, (often butter) and [jam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jam)
  + Bread, [lard](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lard) (or [schmaltz](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schmaltz)) and [salt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salt) and [paprika](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paprika)
  + Bread, [lard](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lard) and [sugar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sugar)
  + Bread and [kajmak](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kajmak)
  + Kosovo Bread [Kosovska pogaca](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Kosovska_pogaca&action=edit&redlink=1)
  + [Sudžuk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sujuk) (also appetizer).

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**Soups**

There are two types of soups in Serbian cuisine: standard soups called *supa*, and soups with roux (browned flour) - called *čorba*. The most common are simple pottages made of [beef](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beef) or [poultry](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poultry) with added [noodles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noodles). [Fish soup](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fish_soup) (*riblja čorba*) and [lamb soup](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Lamb_soup&action=edit&redlink=1) (*jagnjeca čorba*) are considered to be delicacies.

* Goveđa supa (Consommé)
* Teleća čorba (veal ragout soup)
* Jagnjeća čorba (lamb ragout soup)
* Riblji paparikaš ([Fisherman's soup](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Fisherman%27s_soup&action=edit&redlink=1))
* Čorba od ječma i sočiva (Barley and lentil soup)
* Čorba od zelja i sira (Green soup with chees)
* Čorba od spanaća, koprive ili zelja (green soup)
* Čorba od boranije (string beans soup)
* Paradajz čorba (Tomato soup)
* Čorba od luka (Onion soup)
* Ljuta krompir čorba (Spicy potato soup)
* Čorba jajaruša (egg soup)
* Škembe čorba (tripe soup).

**Main Course**

The main course is always with meat. The main courses which are not barbecued:-

* [Pecenje](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Pecenje&action=edit&redlink=1), [Roasted](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roasting) meat (whole roasted pork, lamb and goat)
* [Gulaš](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goulash), (*Goulash*)
* [Dolma](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dolma) (*Japrak*)
* [Đuveč](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C4%90uve%C4%8D), stewed vegetables and pork meat similar to [Ratatouille](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ratatouille)
* [Karađorđeva šnicla](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karadjordje%27s_steak) (breaded rolled steak stuffed with [kajmak](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kajmak) ( [cream cheese](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cream_cheese))and occasionally ham slices
* [Kavurma](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Kavurma&action=edit&redlink=1) (lamb or pig intestines)
* [Wiener schnitzel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wiener_schnitzel) (*Bečka šnicla*)
* [Moussaka](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moussaka) (Мусака, *Musaka*, made with aubergines, potatoes or zucchini)
* [Mućkalica](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muckalica) (pork meat pieces prepared on barbecue set in pepper and tomato hot sauce)
* [Paprikaš](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paprika%C5%A1) (Паприкаш)(pork meat and pepper stew)
* Bećar paprikaš (stew)
* [Podvarak](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Podvarak) (stewed sauerkraut usually with meat and bacon pieces)
* [Prebranac](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Prebranac&action=edit&redlink=1), baked beans in sauce
* [Sataraš](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satara%C5%A1), stewed vegetables, similar to [Ratatouille](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ratatouille)
* Stuffed [Bell peppers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bell_peppers) ([*punjene paprike*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punjena_paprika))
* [Sarma](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarma_(food)) (sauerkraut rolls)
* [Tripes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tripe) ([*škembići*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C5%A0kembi%C4%87i))
* [Noodles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noodles) with [poppy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poppy) (*Rezanci s makom*)
* [Pihtije](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pihtije) (gelatine)
* [Pasulj](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pasulj) (Bean thin stew)
* [Punjena paprika](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punjena_paprika), peppered meat, onion and rice filled in [peppers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capsicum)
* [Punjene tikvice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punjene_tikvice), stuffed zucchini
* [Grašak](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gra%C5%A1ak), Peas
* [Wedding cabbage](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wedding_cabbage&action=edit&redlink=1), (*Svadbarski kupus*) (cooked sauerkraut with smoked pork meat)
* [Dumplings](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dumplings) (*valjušci* or *flekice*) with potatoes or cabbage
* Meat and vegetables cooked under [sač](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sa%C4%8D).

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[Barbecue](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barbecue) is very popular in Serbia, and makes the primary offer of main courses in most restaurants. It is often eaten as [fast food](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fast_food).

* [Pljeskavica](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pljeskavica) ([hamburger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamburger)) **National Dish**
* [Ćevapčići](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C4%86evap%C4%8Di%C4%87i) (ground meat sticks) **National Dish**
* [Vešalica](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Ve%C5%A1alica&action=edit&redlink=1) (grilled strips of pork loin meat)
* Various [sausages](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sausage)
* [Mixed grill](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mixed_grill) (*mešano meso*)
* [Skewered](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skewer) [kabobs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kabob) (*ražnjići*)
* [Leskovački roštilj](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Leskova%C4%8Dki_ro%C5%A1tilj&action=edit&redlink=1) ([Leskovac](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leskovac) barbecue)
* [Gyros](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gyros), various meats with tzatziki and Pita bread.

**Appetizers**

* [Meze](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meze), small dishes, appetizers.
* [Turšija](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tursu), pickled vegetables.

**Dairy Products**

* [Kajmak](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kajmak), cream
* [Kiselo Mleko](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Kiselo_Mleko&action=edit&redlink=1), Buttermilk
* [Yoghurt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yoghurt)
* [Pavlaka](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pavlaka), heavy soured cream (*smetana*)
* White cheese
* Zlatar chees
* [Cream cheese](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cream_cheese)
* [Kačkavalj](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ka%C4%8Dkavalj) yellow sheep milk cheese ([*Caciocavallo*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caciocavallo))
* Brined cheese
  + [Feta](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feta), brined cheese of mostly sheep milk
  + [Sirenje](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sirenje), brined cheese of goat, cow or sheep milk
* [Vlašić cheese](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Vla%C5%A1i%C4%87_cheese&action=edit&redlink=1) (*Vlašićki sir*)
* [Vurda](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Vurda&action=edit&redlink=1), Sheep milk
* [Siraz](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Siraz&action=edit&redlink=1), unpasteurized cow's milk cheese
* [Pule cheese](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Pule_cheese&action=edit&redlink=1), donkey milk cheese, most expensive cheese in the world.

**Bread**

Bread is the basis of Serbian meals and it is often treated almost ritually. A traditional Serbian welcome is to offer the guest with just [bread and salt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bread_and_salt); bread also plays an important role in [religious rituals](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serbian_Orthodox_Church). Some people believe that it is sinful to throw away bread regardless of how old it is. Although [pasta](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pasta), [rice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rice), [potato](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Potato) and similar side dishes did enter the everyday cuisine, many Serbs still eat bread with these meals.

In most bakeries and shops, white [wheat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wheat) bread loafs (typically 600 [grams](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gram)) are sold. In modern times, black bread and various [graham bread](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graham_bread) variations regain popularity as a part of more healthy diets. In many rural households, bread is still baked in ovens, usually in bigger loafs. Also, the following breads and porridges are part of the traditional cuisine:-

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* [Đevrek](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Djevrek), ring-shaped bread-pastry
* [Kačamak](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kacamak), made of boiled cornmeal, potato and, sometimes [feta cheese](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feta_cheese) or [skorup](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skorup) ([*polenta*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polenta))
* [Pereca](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pereca), baked snack of savory or sweet varieties (*Pretzel*)
* [Pogačica](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pog%C3%A1csa), type of bread
* [Masonica](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Popara), bread with milk, sugar and [kajmak](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kajmak) or [sirene](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sirene) (*Popara*)
* [Soda bread](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soda_bread)
* [Languš](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Langu%C5%A1), deep fried flat bread
* [Pita](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pita#Stuffed_pita), pocket flat bread
* Somun, type of bread
* Lepinje – a type of flat bread
* [Užice lepinje](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=U%C5%BEi%C4%8Dka_lepinja&action=edit&redlink=1). – Užice flat bread

**Pies**

Serbian word for [pie](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pie) is "pita", which should not be confused with Greek [pita](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pita). Greek pita is a kind of bread and is not called pita in Serbian (a similar pastry is called [lepinja](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lepinja)), while in Serbian language, "pita" refers to a pie in general, either one eaten in Serbia or a foreign one (such as [apple pie](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apple_pie)).

A Serbian pie could, in general, be called in two ways: according to its mode of preparation, and according to its [filling](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Filling_(cooking)) (although not every pie is prepared with every filling). For example, a "bundevara" is a pie filled with [pumpkin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pumpkin) and could refer to either a [savijača](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Savija%C4%8Da&action=edit&redlink=1) (made of rolled [phyllo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phyllo)) or a [štrudla](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nut_roll) (made of rolled [dough](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dough)). Both sweet and salty pies are made, and some pies could be prepared in the same way with either sweet or salty filling.

A number of Serbian pies are made with [phyllo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phyllo), called "kore" in Serbian language. These include:-

* [Burek](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burek) (meat pie)
* [Gibanica](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gibanica) ( a type of chees and egg pie)
* [Savijača](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Savija%C4%8Da&action=edit&redlink=1)
* [Čalabrca](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=%C4%8Calabrca&action=edit&redlink=1) (a type of pie)
* Pita (pie) :
  + sa sirom (cheese pie)
  + sa jabukama (rolled apple pie)
  + s višnjama (sour cherries pie)
  + sa spanaćom (spinach pie)
  + s gljivama (mushrooms pie)
  + krompiruša (potato pie)
  + od praziluka (leek pie)
  + Uvijena pita zeljanica (sorrel pie)
  + Bundevara (pumpkin pie).

A common Serbian pie, not made with phyllo, is called "štrudla". To add to the confusion, it is not similar to [strudel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strudel), but rather to the [nut roll](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nut_roll); but it is commonly made with [poppy seeds](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poppy_seeds) and not walnuts. Various štrudlas include:-

* štrudla s makom, also called [***makovnjača***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Makovnja%C4%8Da) (nut roll with [poppy seeds](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poppy_seeds))
* štrudla s orasima ([nut roll](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nut_roll) with walnuts)
* štrudla sa sirom (nut roll filled with cheese, eggs, and usually [raisins](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raisins)).

[Tarts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tart) and similar pies have appeared in Serbian bakeries relatively recently and are not a traditional meal.

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# Traditions and Customs

Serbs have many traditions. The [Slava](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slava) is an exclusive custom of the Serbs, each family has one patron saint that they venerate on their feast day. The [Serbian Orthodox Church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serbian_Orthodox_Church) uses the traditional [Julian Calendar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian_Calendar), as per which Christmas Day (December 25) falls currently on January 7 of the [Gregorian Calendar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gregorian_Calendar), thus the Serbs celebrate Christmas on January 7, shared with the Orthodox churches of [Jerusalem](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orthodox_Church_of_Jerusalem), [Russia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Orthodox_Church), [Georgia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georgian_Orthodox_and_Apostolic_Church), [Ukraine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Christianity_in_Ukraine) and the [Greek Old Calendarists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_Old_Calendarists).

* [Slava](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slava), Serbian Orthodox Patron saint veneration
* [Kumstvo](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Kumstvo&action=edit&redlink=1), God-parenthood in the Serbian Orthodox Church
* [Pobratimstvo](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Pobratimstvo&action=edit&redlink=1), blood-brotherhood
* [Kolo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kolo_(dance)), Serbian folk dance in circle.
* [Serbian Christmas traditions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serbian_Christmas_traditions)
* [Badnjak (Serbian)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Badnjak_(Serbian)), Christmas tradition
* [Serbian epic poetry](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serbian_epic_poetry), Epic poetry

The Serbs are a highly family-oriented society. A peek into a Serbian dictionary and the richness of [their terminology related to kinship](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serbian_kinship) speaks volumes.

Of all [Slavs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slavic_peoples) and [Orthodox Christians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Orthodox_Church), only Serbs have the custom of [*slava*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slava). *Slava* is celebration of a saint; unlike most customs that are common for the whole people, each family separately celebrates its own saint (of course, there is a lot of overlap) who is considered its protector. A *slava* is inherited, mostly, though not exclusively from father to son (if a family has no son and a daughter stays in parental house and her husband moves in, hers, not his, slava is celebrated). Each household has only one saint it celebrates, which means that the occasion brings all of the family together. However, since many saints (e.g. St. Nicholas, St. John the Baptist, St. George, St. Archangels of Gabriel and Michael, and the Apostles St. Peter and Paul) have two feast days, both are marked.

The traditional dance is a [circle dance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circle_dance) called [*kolo*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kolo_(dance)), which is common among Serbs, Croats, Montenegrins and Macedonians. It is a collective dance, where a group of people (usually several dozen, at the very least three) hold each other by the hands or around the waist dancing, forming a [circle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circle) (hence the name), semicircle or [spiral](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiral). It is called *Oro* in Montenegro. Similar circle dances also exist in other cultures of the region.

Serbs have [their own customs regarding Christmas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serbian_Christmas_traditions). The [Serbian Orthodox Church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serbian_Orthodox_Church) uses the [Julian calendar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian_calendar), so Christmas currently falls on January 7 of the [Gregorian calendar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gregorian_calendar). Early in the morning of Christmas Eve, the head of the family would go to a forest in order to cut [*badnjak*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Badnjak_(Serbian)), a young [oak](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oak), the oak tree would then be brought into the church to be blessed by the priest. Then the oak tree would be stripped of its branches with combined with wheat and other grain products would be burned in the fireplace. The burning of the *badnjak* is a ritual which is most certainly of pagan origin and it is considered a sacrifice to God (or the old pagan gods) so that the coming year may bring plenty of food, happiness, love, luck and riches. Nowadays, with most Serbs living in towns, most simply go to their church service to be given a small parcel of oak, wheat and other branches tied together to be taken home and set afire. The house floor and church is covered with [hay](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hay), reminding worshippers of the [stable](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stable) in which [Jesus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus) was born.

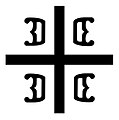
Christmas Day itself is celebrated with a feast, necessarily featuring [roasted piglet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roasted_piglet) as the main meal. The most important Christmas meal is [*česnica*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cesnica), a special kind of bread. The bread contains a coin; during the [lunch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lunch), the family breaks up the bread and the one who finds the coin is said to be assured of an especially happy year.

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Christmas is not associated with presents like in the [West](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_world), although it is the day of [Saint Nicholas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Nicholas), the protector saint of children, to whom presents are given. However, most Serbian families give presents on New Year's Day. Santa Claus (*Deda Mraz* (literally meaning *Grandpa Frost*)) and the Christmas tree (but rather associated with [New Year's Day](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Year%27s_Day)) are also used in Serbia as a result of [globalisation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Globalisation). Serbs also celebrate the [Old New Year](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_New_Year) (currently on January 14 of the [Gregorian Calendar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gregorian_Calendar)).

On Orthodox [Easter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Easter), Serbs have the tradition of [Slavic Egg decorating](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egg_decorating_in_Slavic_culture).

# National Symbols

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Serbian_cross.jpg)

Serbian tetragrammatic cross.

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Nemanjic_small_COA.jpg)

The Serbian eagle on the [Nemanjić](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/House_of_Nemanji%C4%87) Shield.

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**SERBIAN SOCIAL SERVICES AND SUPPORT INCOPERATION**

**Welcome to Serbian Social Services and Support Inc.**

The Serbian Social Services and Support (SSSS) was formed and incorporated in April 1995. This association has the responsibilities to plan the development of further services for the Serbian community in Victoria. Since the establishment the Serbian Social Services has given its support to the Serbian elderly and the most disadvantaged members of the Serbian community.

At Serbian Social services and Support, our mission is:

**“To give you best care possible; the care that you deserve”**

The Serbian Social Services Inc. has two offices. Head office is in St Albans, and Branch office in Dandenong our details are:

**Shop 4, 350 Main Road West, St Albans VIC. 3021**

**Phone: (03) 9356 4555**

**Coordinator: Mr. Milan Pualic**

**Assistant Coordinator: Miss Marina Jovovic**

**Admin. Support Worker: Ms Mila Hrzenjak**

**Volunteers: Mrs Sandra Afu**

**Mrs Verica Markovic**

**Email:** [**serbian-sss@iprimus.com.au**](mailto:serbian-sss@iprimus.com.au)

**Website:** [**www.serbiansss.com.au**](http://www.serbiansss.com.au)

**Trading Hours: Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm**

**Shop 7, 249-259 Lonsdale Street**

**Dandenong VIC 3175**

**Ph:(03) 9793 2100**

**Social Worker/Counselor: Mrs. Dragana Musicki**

**Admin Support Worker: Mrs Zeljka Rosuljas**

**Volunteer: Mr Marko Latinovic**

**Email:** [**ssss\_dandenong@iprimus.com.au**](mailto:ssss_dandenong@iprimus.com.au)

**Website: www.serbiansss.com.au**

**Trading Hours: Monday & Tuesday 9am to 4pm**

**Wednesday 9am to 4:30pm**

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**What is Social Support and Friendly Visiting?**

The Serbian Social Services and Support Inc. receives finding from the Department of Health to provide Social Support Program, which is run by the Coordinator responsible for recruiting volunteers.

Our activities include; Social Support Program, Visiting Program and culturally linguistically appropriate services, Volunteer Coordination, PAG Core and also community Aged Care Packages for the Serbian clients where 30 of the clients managed by the Benetas and 10 of our clients are managed by the Baptist Community Care. We have also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Fronditha Care to have 10 nursing beds especially for the Serbian clients.

Our organization provides different services to our clients, and all our workers are bilingual.

Our service motto is:

**“Together we are stronger”, “Help each other”, “Look out for each other”**

The goal of the Serbian Social Services and support is to contribute to maintaining and enhancing the security, independence, emotional, social and intellectual well-being of the frail older people, and younger people with disabilities, and their carers, assessed as in need of support. The services three mottos reflect the goals of the service and in particular positive aging message through the themes of working together, helping each other and more importantly looking for each other.

**Problem with the Australian Census and Serbian identity**

It is difficult to obtain an accurate demographic profile of the Serbian Community, as the Australian population census does not enumerate ethnic identification. Because decisions about funding for services are often effected by the total numbers of a target groups, it is therefore vital for any ethic group to provide accurate statistic about their community. The size of Serbian Community in Australia has generally been underestimated, which has been to the detriment of their ability to argue a strong case linking needs and population size.

Whereas for some ethnic communities data on ‘country-of-birth’ or ‘language-spoken-at-home’ may give a good indication of the extent of the local population, this is not the case for the Australian-Serbian population. This is due to the variety of ethnic groups, cultural backgrounds and languages which existed in the former Yugoslavia, and which are also represented in Australia.

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# Persons of Serbian Ancestry in Victoria

In Australia, the Serbs can be listed under the language Serbo-Croatian, Serbian and Yugoslav, but have tender to identify themselves as ‘Yugoslavs’ and speaking Yugoslav language more than other ethnic groups. Usually one has to combine the numbers for these three languages to get an estimate of the total population, though even this technic has its problems and critics. It is no wonder then that Serbian community has been less visible statistically comparison to other groups. Unfortunately, even the most recent Australian census (in 2011) is of little assistance in recording the extent of this identification.

Through as large in number as other major groups from Yugoslavia, Serbs are not as visible in Australian society as their number might indicate. In the Victoria there are eleven Serbian Churches and one Monastery, nine Pensioners clubs, eleven other clubs, two welfare organizations, tree newspapers, six radio stations, and nine sport clubs. Despite the existence of such groups, very little is known about the Serbs. It is important that the methods of collecting statistical data on immigrants from the Former Yugoslavia be revised so that their ethnic origin or religion be known.

In 2001 there were 30,362 persons identifying with Serbian ancestry. The FR of Yugoslavia is largely made up of the former states of Serbia and Montenegro. Although Montenegrin was a separate ancestry category in the 2001 Census, only 228 persons identified with this ancestry. The total number of persons identifying with Serbian ancestry (30,362) was lower that the number of FR of Yugoslavia-born identifying with other ancestries associated with the former Balkans.

According to the census 2001 local Government Areas (LGAs) with a large number of persons identified with Serbian ancestry, both first and second responses, were Greater Dandenong (11.6 per cent or 3,531 persons), Brimbank (10.8 per cent or 3,281) and City of Casey (7.8 per cent or 2,367). A high proportion of persons identifying with Serbian ancestry were born in FR of Yugoslavia (41.5 per cent or 12,608 persons); 37.5 per cent (11,368 persons) were born in Australia; 6.5 per cent (1,964) were born in Bosnia and Herzegovina; 4.5 per cent (1,379) were born in Croatia; 3.5 per cent (1,076) were born in South Eastern Europe, not further defined; and 3.9 per cent (1,176) were born in other countries. See page 12 for more information.

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**Persons of Serbian Ancestry in Victoria by Top Ten LGAs**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Serbian ancestry  First response | | Serbian ancestry Second response | | First & Second responses(a) | | Total LGA population | |
| Local  Government Area | Total | % of total | Total | % of total | Total | % of total | Persons | % of total |
| Greater Dandenong (C) | 3,331 | 13.3 | 200 | 3.8 | 3,351 | 11.6 | 124,400 | 2.7 |
| Brimbank (C) | 2,862 | 11.4 | 419 | 8.0 | 3,281 | 10.8 | 163,606 | 3.5 |
| Casey (C) | 2,070 | 8.2 | 297 | 5.7 | 2,367 | 7.8 | 177,149 | 3.8 |
| Greater Geelong (C) | 1,471 | 5.9 | 326 | 6.2 | 1,797 | 5.9 | 186,889 | 4.0 |
| Hobsons Bay (C) | 1,313 | 5.2 | 161 | 3.1 | 1,474 | 4.9 | 80,913 | 1.7 |
| Hume (C) | 891 | 3.5 | 169 | 3.2 | 1,060 | 3.5 | 131,778 | 2.8 |
| Whittlesea (C) | 866 | 3.4 | 152 | 2.9 | 1,018 | 3.4 | 114,187 | 2.4 |
| Darebin (C) | 859 | 3.4 | 154 | 2.9 | 1,013 | 3.3 | 123,611 | 2.7 |
| Maribyrnong (C) | 867 | 3.5 | 89 | 1.7 | 956 | 3.1 | 59,649 | 1.3 |
| Knox (C) | 579 | 2.3 | 193 | 3.7 | 772 | 2.5 | 143,279 | 3.1 |
| Other LGAs(b) | 10,011 | 39.9 | 3,082 | 58.8 | 13,093 | 43.1 | 3,355,530 | 72.0 |
| **Victoria** | **25,210** | **100.0** | **5,242** | **100.0** | **30,632** | **100.0** | **4,660,991** | **100.0** |

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**The Serbian Language**

Serbian language belongs to a group of Slavic languages (Russian, Polish, Macedonian...). The Cyrillic alphabet is used. There are different dialects within the Serbian language. The Serbian language, reformed by Vuk Karadzic has a phonetic script (each sound has one special letter, it is written the way it sounds.

**Example of Cyrillic Script:**

* ДОБРО ЈУТРО **GOOD MORNING** /**ENGLISH**
* ДОБРО ДОШЛИ **WELLCOME / ENGLISH**
* ХВАЛА **THANK YOU / ENGLISH**

**Serbian Culture and Tradition**

Social and cultural life revolve around and is influenced by the Serbian Orthodox Church whose role is to preserve culture, tradition and ethnic identity. Serbs celebrate religious and historical events based on tradition (marriages, births, funerals, religious festivals ...). Serbs traditionally lived in extended families, but now are moving towards nuclear families. Younger Serbs are expected to look after elderly parents. Serbs have their traditional food such as cabbage roll (**sarma**), soup, bread, roast meats and are famous for their hospitality.

**Migration and Settlement Experience**

There are four major waves of Serbian migration in Australia:

* 1st - after WWII: refugees and prisoners of war
* 2nd -1960-1970: economic migrants
* 3rd -1980’s : professionals and skilled migrants
* 4rh – 1990’s onwards- migrants and refugees from the war affected Former Yugoslavia (people of Serbian origin from Bosnia and Croatia).

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**Difficulty identifying people with Serbian ancestry**

As we previously mentioned, according to census 2001 the number of Serbian were 30,362 persons identified with Serbian ancestry The number of persons identifying with Serbian ancestry, according to census 2006 were 29,599. According to last census 2011 the number of persons identifying with Serbian ancestry were 22,066. As you can see the number has dropped dramatically in the last 5 years. It is difficult to obtain correct demographic profile of the Serbian community in Victoria.

Further, national identity based on religious community is not the only kind of national identity- as emerges from what was said about the competition between the Yugoslav, language-based identity and the older religion-based identity. Nor is national identity the only form of group identity. Many people in the twentieth century have expected that we would soon forget about national identity and replace it with some other loyalties- and perhaps this may be beginning in Western Europe. What this means in the case of the Balkans is that identities have survived and maintained themselves in competition. And this in turn means that ordinary people for a long time have been under pressure to declare and align themselves with one group or another, one cause or another. They were not allowed to claim to be Australian, British and Scots simultaneously. These pressures have been strong-but they have not been irresistible, and sometimes people have tried to avoid them or oppose them. Where they are children or mix marriages, for example, or live in frontier community, or are perfectly bilingual from early childhood, they may resent being ‘pigeon-holed’ in one culture rather be no shame in passing oneself off as a member of the dominate culture –or in emigrating to Australia to a society which has less of this kind of pressure. The ambiguity-of being able to belong to different nations in different circumstances, or of not knowing what one’s national identity really is. This is not something that nationalists like to hear, but I would suggest with respect that it be considered.

**Language and Literacy in Elderly Serbs**

Some elderly Serbs are semi-literate in their own language. Education in mainly primary and some secondary education completed. Limited knowledge of English. Language can be a barrier when communicating. Oral communication is the most effective.

**Health Issues in Elderly Serbs in Victoria**

Their prefer Serbian speaking GP. The most common health issues are: diabetes, high blood pressure, cholesterol, hart diseases, and weight issues. There is still stigma attached to mental illnesses and dementia.

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**Cultural Awareness Issues for Assessment Officers, Health Workers, Nursing Home Staff and Public Officers**

Polite to shake hands with both, male and female clients. Formally greet clients with title, name and surname. Have a few minutes for friendly conversation. Clients will offer food and drinks as a sign of welcome. Some may ask you to remove your shoes inside of house. Great expectations on workers to be on tie or even early for appointments. Always book an accredited interpreter who speaks Serbian (do not use friends or members of family as they may misinterpret or answer for a client). Be aware that clients may find some questions very personal and may feel uncomfortable and reluctant to answer. Clients may not be willing to sign documents.

**Aging and Attitudes to Professional Services of Serbian Elderly**

Preference for ethno-specific services. Lack of confidence and knowledge to access mainstream services. Poor English proficiency and social isolation. Lack of understanding and awareness of local services and Australia’s system and law. Reluctant to seek help. Unwilling to go to nursing homes as there is a s an expectation on family members to provide care.

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