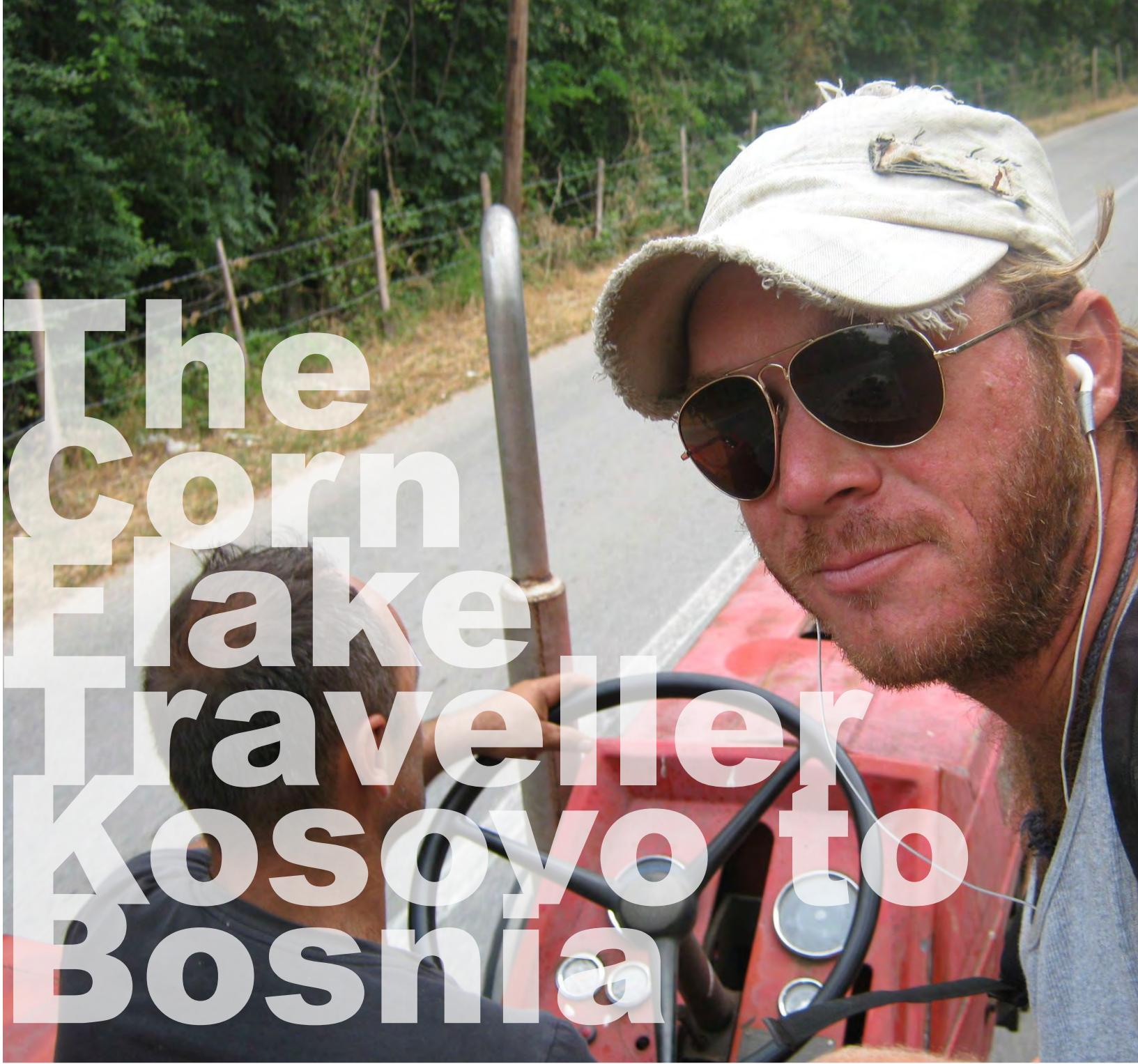


The Corn Flake Traveler Kosovo to Bosnia

A close-up photograph of a man with a beard and mustache, wearing a white baseball cap, dark sunglasses, and white headphones. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. He is driving a red tractor, with the steering wheel visible in the foreground. The background shows a rural road lined with trees and a fence.



To cycle from Macedonia to Bosnia I had to pass through Serbia and although I only spent a day doing so I was very happy to get out. The place didn't have a good vibe, either that or my opinion was swayed by stories told to me by people in other Balkan countries about their brutality during the war. Leaving the country involved crossing the border into Kosovo, where I was surprised to meet a long queue of U.K and German registered cars waiting to be searched. I went straight to the front and was waved through not requiring an exit stamp as Serbians don't recognise Kosovo as another country. After crossing a kilometre wide strip of no-man's land I came to the Kosovar border patrol and met some very friendly guards who gave me an entry stamp and lots of advice on where to go in Kosovo.

From the moment I crossed No-man's land the people became noticeably friendlier, a lot more smiley faces and chatty people, typified by a guy at the first petrol station I came to. I stopped to buy a drink and he approached me, shook my hand and repeatedly indicated how pleased he was to meet me. In the next town I stopped to eat lunch and was surrounded by people watching me (mainly kids), in fact, for the next 2 days I didn't have a meal without people sitting by me and chatting or just watching me. The people were so inquisitive, striking up conversation and asking questions. Every time I stopped I had people come up to me, people talked to me from their cars, families walking along the road would stop me cycling and I had loads of kids race alongside me on their bikes.



One guy pulled over in his car and spent 10 – 15 minutes giving me advice on where to go, took photos of me, introduced me to some other locals and thanked me, as a Brit, for bombing the Serbs. He even offered me a place to stay, although sadly I couldn't accept his offer as I only had a week to arrive in Visoko, Bosnia. I later found out that 96% of the Kosovan people consider themselves Albanian, which explained a lot as I met hosts of friendly people on my trip through Albania. It also explained why I saw so many Albanian flags everywhere, I must have seen 20 – 30 processions of cars flying big Albanian flags, driving along beeping their horns and standing up through their sun-roofs shouting things I couldn't understand.

I visited the capital for a look around, although there wasn't much to look at; a mosque, a dull government building and a statue of Skanderbeg on a horse, the famous Albanian legend. But it was just a large block of concrete really so I left pretty quickly, stopping to eat some corn flakes on my way out of town, next to some graffiti that read 'Kosova Republik'.

The 40 mile journey to Pec/Peje was full of statues and memorials to people that had died in combat, I lost count of how many I passed and in fact tried not to notice them after a while as they were a timely reminder of the atrocities that took place here at the end of the 90's. There were other reminders of the war, like bullet holes in buildings and signs on the bridges indicating the maximum weight the tanks could be to cross. I also saw lots of German, UK and U.S registered cars, donations I guess after so many cars were destroyed in the war.

I had to cross a huge mountain to reach Montenegro but was again helped out by the Kosovan community spirit when a guy in a tractor offered me a ride, I absolutely jumped at the chance as it was a 20 mile climb. It felt brilliant sat on his tractor speeding up the mountain, I was able to enjoy the view without having to pedal. We passed the Kosovan border patrol and the driver knew everybody there, which he later told me was because he was a policeman and worked there as well as having a farm. I found this hilarious as 10 minutes before we reached the border he drank a couple of cans of beer while still driving along, this was at 10am.

I passed through Montenegro in just under 4 days, twice as long as I had anticipated because it turned out to be a very mountainous country, this meant beautiful scenery but slow progress and I was running out of time to reach the start of the volunteer program. I was treated to some particularly amazing scenery on the 4th day, which began with a 20 mile cycle to reach Pluzine to buy some food, followed by breakfast next to the gorgeous turquoise lake nearby. I then continued around the lake, passing through lots of tunnels which allowed the road to follow the lake through the massive, steep canyon it was set in. After 10 miles I crossed a dam and the lake became a turquoise river, carving its way through some lovely scenery.

I crossed over a wooden bridge into Bosnia and spent the rest of the day cycling through the dense forest that the country seemed to be carpeted in. That evening I snapped a pole as I was setting up the tent but I managed to use sticks, part of a fishing pole and duct tape to fix it and despite me doubting it would last the whole night, it actually lasted the rest of the trip.

I went to Bosnia specifically to see for myself if Dr Sam Semir Osmanagich really did discover pyramids in 2005. I had listened to Sam giving various online lectures and radio interviews and was intrigued by the volunteer program he had set up. I thought it would be a cool to go and excavate some potential pyramids and I was curious to find out why there could be such debate between the mainstream and alternative media organizations. Lucky for me I was listening to one of his interviews on Red Ice Radio as I cycled next to one of the many rivers twisting its way through the endless, lush green forest. He mentioned that the route I was intending to take was a motorway and I was able to choose an alternative route, saving me back-tracking and cycling an extra 20-30km.





Travel



I was ecstatic as I descended into Visoko, following another river into the Bosnian Valley of the Pyramids, this was a place I had wanted to come to for years and had been cycling towards for months. As I entered the valley I was instantly struck by how pyramid-like the “hills” looked, yet also instantly confused by which hill, was which pyramid. I had studied maps of the area but it seemed like there were other pyramid shaped hills that weren’t on the map or hadn’t been given names.

I cycled straight to the hotel where the volunteer program was based to find it was €15 for a dormitory bed. The owner was there and he seemed a bit money obsessed so I walked out and cycled to a hill opposite the Pyramid of the Sun to camp and watch the valley as the sun set. It was a very happy moment for me sat in my tent admiring what looked to me, very much like a huge pyramid. Plus I had 2 weeks to explore the area , I didn’t have to cycle the next day and I had some corn flakes for breakfast.

The 2 weeks were fantastic and eye-opening. The first day of the program started with a tour of the Pyramid of the Sun, lead by Dr. Sam himself. He showed us a good view of the pyramid, then we visited some tunnels that start 2.5km from the pyramid and lead underneath and finally we walked up onto one of the faces to see some of the blocks of concrete that have been uncovered.

I was involved in excavating at the tunnels and at a couple of sites on the Pyramid of the Sun itself. Work was only 6 hours a day and we finished at 2pm so there was plenty of time to explore the valley. Along with some of the other volunteers we visited the 5 different pyramid-shaped hills/pyramids (Sun, Moon, Dragon, Mother Earth and Love), visiting the P. of the Sun and Moon on numerous occasions. I also used my bike to visit another valley, which looked like it might have pyramids in it as well.

The P. of the Sun stands at a height of 220m, whilst the P. of the Moon measures 190m, both bigger than the biggest at Giza and take a good hour to climb up. Both have a pyramid shape but have causeways. Dragon has a convincing shape but unconvincing excavated patches, the shape of Mother Earth is elongated like a Toblerone and the shape of Love is so disjointed we couldn’t work out where the top was.

From the shapes of the hills alone it is difficult to be conclusive but considering they are covered by 1000’s of years of sediment and thick forest that’s not surprising. Yet the tunnel network (with an amazing ventilation system that circulates the air) and the layers of concrete and tiled terraces that have been uncovered strengthen the argument that they are indeed pyramids. Skeptics say that the sections of concrete and terraces they have found are natural and that the tunnels have just been dug out. Could be but this ancient form of concrete (made from a mix of different sized stones and clay from a nearby hill) has been shown to be stronger and denser than modern day concretes.

There are also scientific studies that claim that the P. of the Sun is emanating an ultrasonic beam from the top. This became more plausible for me when on one of our excursions to the top we found a rectangular stone, dug around it with our hands and felt heat coming from inside the pyramid. There are also claims that the tunnels have healing properties, which I and many others experienced first-hand, suggesting it was more than just a placebo effect. I had been suffering for over a month with problems associated with sitting on a saddle for an average of 9-10 hours a day and it all disappeared after my first day working in the tunnels.

It was an amazing experience, in an amazing place and somewhere I recommend people visit before they make up their minds about them being pyramids or just hills. After my time there I wasn’t 100% convinced they were pyramids but left feeling there is at the very least something there to further investigate.

Many people refer to their experiences in the Bosnian Valley of the Pyramids as inspirational and life changing. For me, I liked meeting people who were similarly interested in the possibility that human history differs from the official story we are taught at school. It inspired a group of us to form ‘The Modern Explorers’ a community of people that want to investigate for ourselves what our ancestors really left behind. For anyone interested in this kind of thing who wants to be involved you can find us at www.modernexplorers.co.uk