

Bosnian Pronunciation and Phrase Guide

The modern Bosnian language is a newly defined classification of the Serbo-Croatian tongue. After secession from Yugoslavia, the Bosnian government declared the official language to be called "Bosnian" rather than "Serbo-Croatian." However, Serbo-Croatian, "Croatian," "Serbian," and "Bosnian" are the same language, with minor structural & idiomatic differences. Bosnian (Serbo-Croatian) is a Southern Slavonic tongue in the Slavonic group of languages of the Indo-European family. International linguistic authorities continue to call the language "Serbo-Croatian." It is closely related to Slovenian, Macedonian & Bulgarian. Nouns have gender and cases, and the past tense is conjugated by gender while other tenses are conjugated by person.

The language itself should not prove difficult to pronounce. Grammatical complexities will however present challenges to those not familiar with highly inflected languages, such as Latin or Russian. Inflection is the grammatical process of altering the noun to indicate its position & function in the sentence. The noun is said to have "case." Whereas English nouns are defined in the sentence through the use of prepositions - as in the sentence "Mary throws the ball to John," inflected languages alter the form of the noun, so "John" in the example would appear as the object in the sentence in the accusative case (indicated by the change in the suffix, and less frequently the prefix). The same sentence in Bosnian/S-C would have no preposition "to" as in "Mary baca loptu Johnu." Notice that "John" received a "u" as a suffix, which immediately governs the meaning of the word "Johnu" and dictates its function in the sentence. Inflected languages are therefore more precise since confusion as to the intended meaning rarely occurs. In another similarity with Latin, Bosnian/Serbo-Croatian does not use articles.

Certain idiomatic differences exist in the Serbian and Croatian, mostly as a result of regional applications. Some phrases, such as *alahimanet* and *merhaba*, are relatively unique in Bosnian usage, as they are a remnant of Islamic (and therefore Arabic) influences. Since they are foreign words, much like many Italian words found in the Croatian language, they do not constitute a point of difference between the "Croatian" and the "Bosnian" forms of language. The use of "merhaba" in Bosnia is not unlike using an idiomatic French statement in English, such as "vis a vis" or "au contraire." To assert that the Bosnian language is in some way in a different class altogether from Serbo-Croatian merely due to the application of certain phrases & idioms from the period of Turkish occupation is to do an injustice against the nature of all languages. However, consulting separate pages on the Croatian & Serbian phrasebooks may prove beneficial for exposure to regional differences.

Pronunciation guide

Bosnian pronunciation is fairly phonetic and straightforward. Each letter represents only one sound, and multiple sounds are produced only when several letters are combined. The letter "A" represents the sound "ah" in Bosnian/S-C, and it only represents that sound. Unlike in English, where the letter "A" stands for numerous sounds - such as "Ah, eh, aaa, ehy" & so forth, Bosnian/SC letters only represent basic sounds. Speakers of Spanish and Italian will find most sounds in Bosnian to be similar to the ones in their own languages.

Vowels

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| a | like 'a' in "above" |
| e | like 'e' in "enemy" |
| i | like 'i' in "pin" |
| o | like 'o' in "opera" |
| u | like 'u' in "put" |

Consonants

Bosnian consonants are crisper than their counterparts in the English language. Approximating the corresponding consonants in Italian or Russian is closer to their true pronunciation.

| | |
|----|--|
| b | like 'b' in "bed" |
| c | like 'ts' at the end of "cats" (never like an "s" or "k") |
| č | pronounced like "ch" as in "church", but with the tongue up on the roof of the mouth |
| ć | like "ch" as in "chile", but softer, with tongue behind top front teeth |
| d | like 'd' in "dog" |
| dž | very close to "j" as in judge, with tongue up on the roof of the mouth |
| đ | like "j" as in "judge", but softer, with tongue behind top front teeth |
| f | like 'ph' in "phone" |
| g | |

| | |
|----|--|
| | like 'g' in "go" (never pronounced like the "g" in "large") |
| h | a little more emphasized than the 'h' in "help". Somewhat close to the Spanish <i>jota</i> (j), pronounced in the throat |
| j | like 'y' in "yellow" |
| k | like 'k' in "kite" |
| l | like 'l' in "love" |
| lj | like the "lya" sound in "million". Combo of the Bosnian "l" and "j" sounds together |
| m | like 'm' in "mother" |
| n | like 'n' in "nice" |
| nj | like "ny" in "Sonya" |
| p | like 'p' in "pappy" |
| r | rolled slightly, like the Spanish r in "pero" |
| s | like 'ss' in "hiss" |
| š | like "sh" in "sheep", with tongue raised toward roof of mouth |
| t | like 't' in "top" |
| v | like 'v' in "victory" |
| z | like 'z' in "haze" |
| ž | like the "s" in "measure", with tongue raised toward roof of mouth |

Phrase list

Basics

Hello/Good Day.

Dobar dan (*DOH-bahr dahn*)

Hello. (*informal*)

Zdravo. (*ZDRAH-voh*) or Merhaba (*MEHR-hah bah*)

How are you?

Kako ste? (*formal*), (*KAH-koh steh*) Kako si? (*informal*) (*KAH-koh see*)

Fine, thank you.

Dobro sam, hvala. (*DOH-broh sahm, HVAH-lah*)

What is your name?

Kako se zovete? (*formal*) (*KAH-koh seh ZOH-veh-teh*)

What is your name?

Kako se zoveš? (*informal*) (*KAH-koh seh ZOH-vehsh*)

My name is _____ .

Zovem se _____ . (*ZOH-vehm seh_____.*)

I am _____. : Ja sam _____. (*yah sahm*)

Nice to meet you.

Drago mi je. (*DRAH-goh mee yeh*)

Please.

Molim. (*MOH-leem*)

Thank you.

Hvala. (*HVAH-lah*)

Thank you very much

Hvala lijepo (*HVAH-lah LEE-yeh-poh*)

You're welcome.

Nema na čemu. (*NEH-mah nah CHEH-moo*)

Yes. ("formal")

Da (*dah*)

Yes. ("informal")

Ja (*yah*)

No.
Ne. (*neh*)

Excuse me. (*getting attention*)
Oprostite. (*oh-prohs-TEE-teh*)

Excuse me. (*begging pardon*)
Izvinite. (*EEZ-vee-nee-teh*)

I'm sorry.
Oprostite. (*oh-prohs-TEE-teh*)
I'm sorry. ("expressing condolence"): Žao mi je. (*zhao mee yeh*)

Goodbye
Alahimanet (religious implication) or Zbogom.

Goodbye (*informal*)
do viđenja (*doh vee-jeh-nyah*) or čao (*chaoo*) or Zdravo. (*ZDRAH-voh*)

I can't speak Bosnian [well].
Ne govorim dobro bosanski. (*neh goh-VOH-reem DOH-broh boh SAHN-skee*)

Do you speak English?
Da li govorite engleski? (*dah lee goh-VOH-ree-teh ehn-GLEHS-kee*)

Is there someone here who speaks English?
Da li iko ovdje govori engleski? (*dah lee EE-koh ohvd-yeh GOH-voh-ree ehn-GLEES-kee*)

Help!
Upomoć! (*OPOH-mohtch*)

Look out!
Pazite! (*PAH-zee-teh*)

Good morning.
Dobro jutro. (*DOH-broh YOO-troh*)

Good evening.
Dobro večer. (*DOH-broh VEH-chehr*)

Good night.
Laku noć. (*LAH-koo nohtch*)

Good night (*to sleep*)
Laku noć. (*LAH-koo nohtch*)

I don't understand.

Ne razumijem. (*neh RAH-zoo-mee-yehn*)

Where is the toilet?

Gdje je WC? (*gdyeH yeh WC?*)

Problems

Leave me alone.

Pusti me na miru. (*POOS-tee meh nah MEE-roo*)

Don't touch me!

Ne diraj me! (*neh DEE-rah-yuh meh!*)

Police!

Policija! (*poh-LEE-tsee-yah!*)

Stop! Thief!

Stanite! Lopov! (*STAH-nee-teh! LOH-pohv!*)

I need your help.

Treba mi vaša pomoć. (*TREH-bah mee VAH-shah POH-mohch*)

It's an emergency.

Hitno je. (*HEET-noh yeh*)

I'm lost.

Izgubio [m] (*EEZ-goo-bio*) izgubila [f] (*EEZ-goo-bee-lah*) sam se. (*sahm seh*)

I lost my bag.

Izgubio [m] (*EEZ-goo-bio*) izgubila [f] (*EEZ-goo-bee-lah*) sam torbu. (*sahm TOHR-boo*)

I lost my wallet.

Izgubio [m] (*EEZ-goo-bio*) izgubila [m] (*EEZ-goo-bee-lah*) sam novčanik. (*sahm NOHV-chah-neek*)

I'm sick.

Bolestan [m] (*BOH-lehs-tahn*) /bolesna [f] (*BOH-lehs-nah*) sam. (*sahm*)

I've been injured.

Povrijedio [m] (*pohv-REE-yeh-dio*) /povrijedila [f] (*pohv-REE-yeh-dee-lah*) sam se. (*sahm seh*)

I need a doctor.

Treba mi doktor. (*TREH-bah mee DOHK-tohr*)

Can I use your phone?

Mogu li se poslužiti telefonom? (*MOH-goo lee seh POHS-loo-zhee-tee teh-LEH-foh-nohm?*)

Numbers

| | | | | |
|----|----------------------|-----------|--------------------------|--|
| 1 | | 22 | | 1,000,000,000 |
| | jedan (...) | | dvadeset dva/dvije (...) | one thousand million in UK , one billion in USA : bilion/milijarda |
| 2 | | 23 | | |
| | dva/dvije (...) | | dvadeset tri (...) | |
| 3 | | 30 | | |
| | tri (...) | | trideset (...) | |
| 4 | | 40 | | 1,000,000,000,000 |
| | četiri (...) | | četrdeset (...) | one billion in UK , one trillion in USA : trilion |
| 5 | | 50 | | |
| | pet (...) | | pedeset (...) | |
| 6 | | 60 | | |
| | šest (...) | | šezdeset (...) | number _____ (<i>train, bus, etc.</i>) |
| 7 | | 70 | | |
| | sedam (...) | | sedamdeset (...) | broj _____ (<i>voz, autobus, itd.</i>) |
| 8 | | 80 | | half |
| | osam (...) | | osamdeset (...) | polo (...) |
| 9 | | 90 | | less |
| | devet (...) | | devedeset (...) | manje (...) |
| 10 | | 100 | | more |
| | deset (...) | | sto (...) | više (...) |
| 11 | | 200 | | |
| | jedanaest (...) | | dvjesta (...) | |
| 12 | | 300 | | |
| | dvanaest (...) | | trista (...) | |
| 13 | | 400 | | |
| | trinaest (...) | | četiristo ("...") | |
| 14 | | 500 | | |
| | četрнаest (...) | | petsto ("...") | |
| 15 | | 600 | | |
| | petnaest (...) | | šeststo ("...") | |
| 16 | | 700 | | |
| | šesnaest (...) | | sedamsto ("...") | |
| 17 | | 800 | | |
| | sedamnaest (...) | | osamsto ("...") | |
| 18 | | 900 | | |
| | osamnaest (...) | | devetsto ("...") | |
| 19 | | 1000 | | |
| | devetnaest (...) | | hiljada (...) | |
| 20 | | 2000 | | |
| | dvadeset (...) | | dvije hiljade (...) | |
| 21 | | 1,000,000 | | |
| | dvadeset jedan (...) | | milion (...) | |

Time

| | |
|-----------|------------------------------------|
| now | sad(a)(...) |
| later | kasnije(...) |
| before | prije(...) or after : poslije(...) |
| morning | jutro(...) |
| afternoon | popodne(...) |
| evening | veče(...) |
| night | noć(...) |

Clock time

| | |
|----------------|-------------------------------|
| one o'clock AM | jedan sat ujutro (...) |
| two o'clock AM | dva sata ujutro (...) |
| noon | podne (...) |
| one o'clock PM | jedan sat poslije podne (...) |
| two o'clock PM | dva sata poslije podne (...) |
| six o'clock PM | šest sati uvečer (...) |
| midnight | ponoć (...) |

Duration

| | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| _____ minute(s) | _____ minuta |
| _____ hour(s) | _____ sat(i) |
| _____ day(s) | _____ dan(a) |
| _____ week(s) | _____ sedmica(-) |
| _____ month(s) | _____ mjesec(i) |
| _____ year(s) | _____ godina(-) |

Days

| | |
|-----------|------------------------|
| today | danas (...) |
| yesterday | juče (...) |
| tomorrow | sutra (...) |
| this week | ove sedmice (...) |
| last week | prošle sedmice (...) |
| next week | sljedeće sedmice (...) |

Days cont.

Sunday
nedjelja

Monday
ponedjeljak

Tuesday
utorak

Wednesday
srijeda

Thursday
četvrtak

Friday
petak

Saturday
subota

Months

January
Januar / Siječanj

July
Juli / Srpanj

February
Februar / Veljača

August
August / Kolovoz

March
Mart / Ožujak

September
Septembar / Rujan

April
April / Travanj

October
Oktobar / Listopad

May
Maj / Svibanj

November
Novembar / Studeni

June
Juni / Lipanj

December
Decembar / Prosinac

Colors

| | | | |
|-------|--------|--------|-------------|
| black | crna | yellow | žuta |
| white | bijela | green | zelena |
| gray | siva | orange | narandžasta |
| red | crvena | purple | ljubičasta |
| blue | plava | brown | smeđa |

Money

Do you accept American/Australian/Canadian dollars?
Prihvatate li američke/australijske/kanadske dolare?

Do you accept credit cards?
Prihvatate li kreditne kartice?

Can you change money for me?
Možete li mi razmijeniti novac??

Where can I get money changed?
Gdje mogu razmijeniti novac?

Can you change a traveler's check for me?
Možete li mi razmijeniti putnički ček?

Where can I get a traveler's check changed?
Gdje mogu zamijeniti putnički ček?

What is the exchange rate?
Koliki je kurs?

Where is an automatic teller machine (ATM)?
Gdje je bankomat?

Eating

A table for one person/
two people, please.

Molim Vas, sto za jednu/
dviije osobu/osobe.

Can I look at the menu, please?

Mogu li pogledati meni/jelovnik?

Is there a house specialty?

Imate li specijalitet kuće?

Is there a local specialty?

Iate li lokalni specijalitet?

I'm a vegetarian.

Ja sam vegetarijanac.

I want _____.

Želim _____.

I want a dish containing _____.

Želim jelo sa _____.

chicken

piletinom

beef

govedinom

fish

ribom

ham

šunkom

sausage

kobasicom

cheese

sirom

eggs

jajima

salad

salatom

(fresh) vegetables

(svježe) povrće

(fresh) fruit

(svježe) voće

bread

hljeb

toast

tost

noodles

rezancima

rice

rižom

beans

grahom

May I have a glass of _____?

Mogu li dobiti čašu _____?

May I have a cup of _____?

Mogu li dobiti šolju _____?

May I have a bottle of _____?

Mogu li dobiti flašu _____?

coffee

kafe

tea (*drink*)

čaja

juice

soka

(bubbly) water

kisele vode

water

vode

May I have some _____?

Mogu li dobiti _____?

salt

so

black pepper

crni biber

butter

puter

Excuse me, waiter? (*getting attention of server*)

Oprostite, konobar?

I'm finished.

Završio sam.

It was delicious.

Bilo je ukusno.

Please clear the plates.

Molim Vas, odnesita tanjure.

The check, please.

Račun, molim.

